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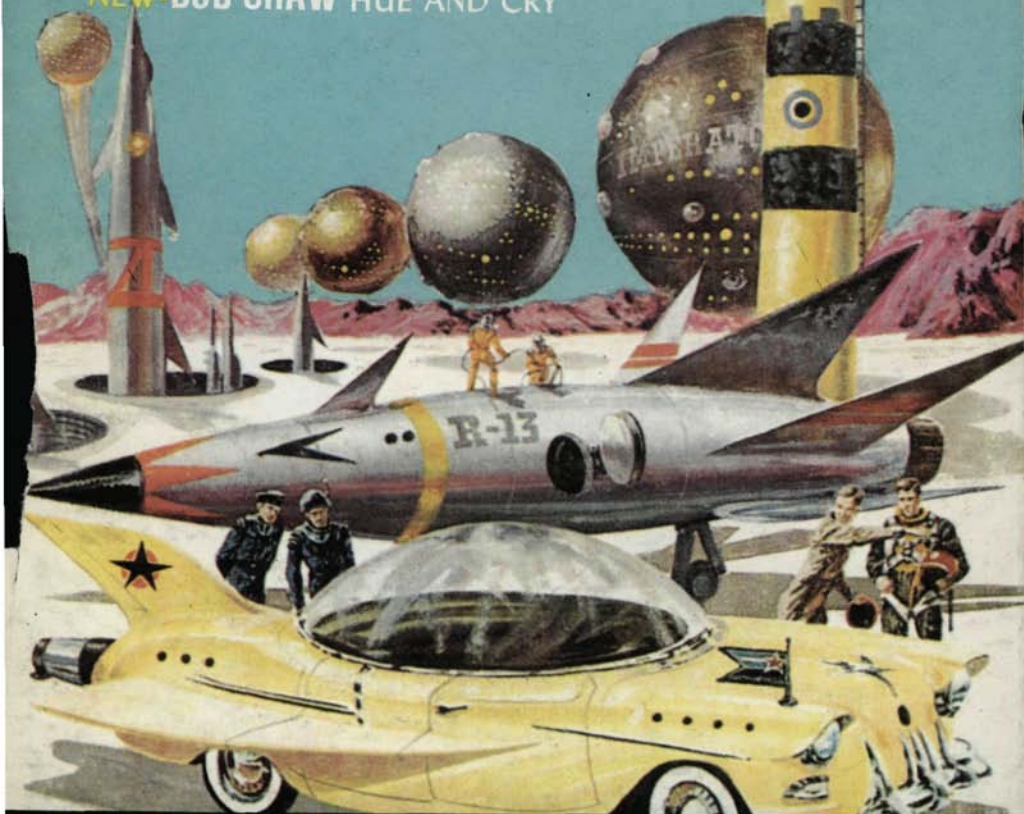
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Stories

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UP THE LINE FIRST PUBLICATION ANYWHERE

NEW-TED WHITE ONLY YESTERDAY

NEW-BOB SHAW HUE AND CRY

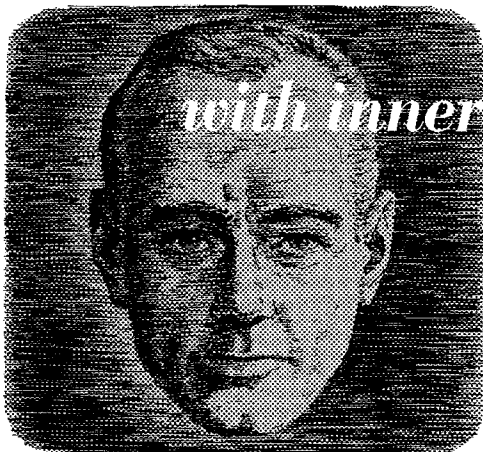


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JULY, 1969 Vol. 43, No. 2

stories

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editorial

Living as I do that life of indolent ease known to all writers and editors, I rarely rise early in the morning. But one morning late in December of 1968, I made it a point to be awake with all essential mental capacities functioning at the gawdawful hour of seven a.m., something less than three hours after I'd knocked off for the night on the book I was writing and had gone to bed.

The occasion was December 21st, and the launching of Apollo Eight. New York City skies were still streaked with rust when I nudged my wife awake, climbed out of bed long enough to turn on and tune the tv set, and then slipped back in under the warm covers.

It was a flawless launch, and a perfect omen for a flawless flight. The liftoff itself was a thing of beauty as the giant Saturn 5 rocket ignited and billowing clouds of steam (from the water used to help cool the launch pad) screened it momentarily from sight and then, poised upon its huge sun-bright torch, the Saturn climbed majestically, almost too slowly to be believed, into the Florida skies. Afterwards one television commentator remarked that the sound of the Saturn thrusters was almost enough to shatter

the windows of buildings miles away. The three-inch speaker on my tv set didn't begin to suggest that awesome sound, but it hinted, broadly. And in my mind I felt it.

The ball of fire that seemed to pursue the rocket into the sky, hungrily consuming most of its fuel in those first few minutes, was greater in diameter than the length of the rocket itself. The flames that trailed the fireball were several times longer. It was a sight I shall never forget: a demonstration of sheer raw power: the guts and determination of a nation to hurl three men and their artificial environment 240,000 miles up and to the Moon.

I've watched dozens of live-tv lifts-off from Cape Kennedy, and I've always felt a sort of primitive awe and thrill, but this one was something special. This one brought up the hair at the base of my neck, and filled my eyes with tears as I squeezed my wife's hand. This one was the one my generation built its dreams on. *This one was science fiction.*

In the beginning there was a dream, and the dream was that man might some day visit the other planets in our heavens. For centuries this dream held little substance, and those planets were

considered more philosophical analogues than worlds in some sense like our own, worlds on which a man might stand. Then, slowly, as we entered the scientific age, man began to dream ways we might travel across "the ether". Early notions, such as balloon ascensions and giant cannon shots, were romantic fantasies, but in the early years of this century a few men—Opel, Goddard, Gernsback—began to believe we had a genuine means for crossing space: the rocket.

It was an era of primitive air flight, a day when horses were still vainly competing with the automobile, and you had to be a little crazy in the eyes of your fellows to believe in rockets. People did insane things with rockets, strapping them onto bicycles, motor-cars, and even railroad flat-cars, in order to test them, and in many cases these fanatic backyard inventors were maimed or killed by their back-firing experiments. And yet, in that relatively early era, a German rocket society was founded which would ultimately lend its impetus to the V-2 rocket, and independently Robert Goddard would invent a spidery contraption which in all its essentials forecast the modern, liquid-fueled rocket engine.

That same era witnessed the birth of science fiction as we know it today.

Although we inherited most of the most common devices of science fiction from Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, we owe our genre to Hugo Gernsback. Gernsback was one of those backyard inventor guys, an early pioneer in radio and television, fascinated with electricity in all its forms, and determinedly forward-looking. Today we would call him a 'futurist'. In those

days he was simply one of a few brilliant visionaries.

Gernsback published magazines for those who thought as he did; the best known was **THE ELECTRICAL EXPERIMENTER**. In that magazine he occasionally printed stories as well as articles. These stories were rather low on literary merit, but they were well received, because they centered themselves on unusual inventions, and presented new ideas in an entertaining fashion.

It was out of Gernsback's almost Messianic zeal to popularize science and tomorrow-mindedness that **AMAZING STORIES** was conceived. The April, 1926 issue of **AMAZING STORIES** was the first issue of the world's first science fiction magazine, and out of this single seed has grown our present virile genre of books and magazines.

The phrase "science fiction" had not yet been coined, but years earlier—in 1915, to be exact—Gernsback had dubbed these science-oriented stories "scientification" (from which comes the still common abbreviation, "sf"). On its masthead, Gernsback called **AMAZING STORIES** "The Magazine of Scientification." Below was the slogan that best explained not only Gernsback's enthusiasm for this new genre, but his readers' as well: "Extravagant Fiction Today . . . Cold Fact Tomorrow."

Early sf readers believed that slogan with a fanaticism which rivalled Gernsback's own. **AMAZING STORIES** was less a business enterprise than a co-operative effort between Gernsback and his readers in which everyone was united by this common bond. It was out of **AMAZING STORIES'** letter

(Continued on page 125)

Up the line! I was just a callow kid who couldn't seem to find a place for myself in the mid-Twenty-First Century until I joined the Time Service as a Courier. Then all history was opened to me—

UP THE LINE

ROBERT SILVERBERG

First of Two Parts

Illustrated by DAN ADKINS

I

Sam the guru was a black man, and his people up the line had been slaves—and before that, kings. I wondered about mine. Generations of sweaty peasants, dying weary? Or conspirators, rebels, great seducers, swordsmen, thieves, traitors, pimps, dukes, scholars, failed priests, translators from the Gheg and the Tosk, courtesans, dealers in used ivories, short-order cooks, butlers, stockbrokers, coin-trimmers? All those people I had never known and would never be, whose blood and lymph and genes I carry—I wanted to know them. I couldn't bear the thought of being separated from my own past. I hungered to drag my past about with me like a hump on my back, dipping into it when the dry seasons came.

"Ride the time-winds, then," said Sam the guru.

I listened to him. That was how I

got into the time-traveling business.

Now I have been up the line. I have seen those who wait for me in the millennia gone by. My past hugs me as a hump.

Pulcheria!

Great - great - multi - great - grandmother!

If we had never met—

If I had stayed out of the shop of sweets and spices—

If dark eyes and olive skin and high breasts meant nothing to me, Pulcheria—

My love. My lustful ancestress. You ache me in my dreams. You sing to me from up the line.

II

He was really black. The family had been working at it for five or six generations, now, since the Afro Revival period. The idea was to purge the gonads of the hated slavemaster

genes, which of course had become liberally entangled in Sam's lineage over the years. Starting about 1960, Sam's people had begun to undo the work of the white devils by mating only with the ebony of hue and woolly of hair. Judging by the family portraits Sam showed me, the starting-point was a cafe-au-lait great-great-great-grandmother. But she married an ace-of-spades exchange student from Zambia or one of those funny little temporary countries, and their eldest son picked himself a Nubian princess, whose daughter married an elegant ebony buck from Mississippi, who—

"Well, my grandfather looked decently brown as a result of all this," Sam said, "but you could see the stain of the mongrel all over him. We had darkened the family hue by three shades, but we couldn't pass for pure. Then my father was born and his genes reverted. In spite of everything. Light skin and a high-bridged nose and thin lips—a mingler; a monster. Genetics must play its little joke on an earnest family of displaced Africans. So Daddo went to a helix parlor and had the caucasoid genes edited, accomplishing in four hours what his ancestors hadn't managed to do in eighty years, and here I be. Black and beautiful."

Sam was about 35 years old. I was 24. In the spring of '59 we shared a two-room suite in Under New Orleans. It was Sam's suite, really, but he invited me to split it with him when he found out I had no place to stay. He was working then part time as an attendant in a sniffer palace.

I was fresh off the pod out of Newer York, where I was supposed to have been third assistant statutory law clerk

UP THE LINE



to Judge Mattachine of the Manhattan County More Supreme Court, Upper. Political patronage got me the job, of course, not brains. Statutory law clerks aren't supposed to have brains; it gets the computers upset. After eight days with Judge Mattachine my patience eroded and I hopped the first pod southbound, taking with me all my earthly possessions, consisting of my toothflash and blackhead remover, my key to the master information output, my most recent thumb-account statement, two changes of clothing, and my lucky piece, a Byzantine gold coin, a nomisma of Alexius I. When I reached New Orleans I got out and wandered down through the underlevels until my feet took me into the sniffer palace on Under Bourbon Street, Level Three. I confess that what attracted me inside were the two jiggy girls who swam fully submerged in a tank of what looked like and turned out to be cognac. Their names were Helen and Betsy and for a while I got to know them quite well. They were the sniffer palace's lead-in vectors, what they used to call come-ons in the atomic days. Wearing gillmasks, they displayed their pretty nudities to the bypassers, promising but never quite delivering orgiastic frenzies. I watched them paddling in slow circles, and they smiled beckoningly at me and finally I went in.

Sam came up to greet me. He was maybe three meters tall in his build-ups, and wore a jock and a lot of oil. Judge Mattachine would have loved him. Sam said, "Evening, white folks, want to buy a dream?"

"What do you have going?"

"Sado, maso, homo, lesbo, inter, outer, upper, downer, and all the vari-

ants and deviants." He indicated the charge plate. "Take your pick and put your thumb right here."

"Can I try samples first?"

He looked closely. "What's a nice Jewish boy like you doing in a place like this?"

"Funny. I was just going to ask you the same thing."

"I'm hiding out from the Gestapo," Sam said. "In blackface. *Yisgadal v'yiskadash*—"

"—*adonai elohainu*," I said. "I'm a Revised Episcopalian, really."

"I'm First Church of Christ Voudoun. Shall I sing a hymn?"

"Spare me," I told him. "Can you introduce me to the girls in the tank?"

"We don't sell flesh here, white folks, only dreams."

"I don't buy flesh, I just borrow it a little while."

"The one with the bosom is Betsy. The one with the backside is Helen. Quite frequently they're virgins, and then the price is higher. Try a dream instead. Look at those lovely masks. You sure you don't want a sniff?"

"Sure I'm sure."

"Where'd you get that Newer York accent?"

I said, "In Vermont, on summer vacation. Where'd you get that shiny black skin?"

"My daddy bought it for me in a helix parlor. What's your name?"

"Jud Elliott. What's yours?"

"Sambo Sambo."

"Sounds repetitious. Mind if I call you Sam?"

"Many people do. You live in Under New Orleans now?"

"Just off the pod. Haven't found a place."

"I get off work at 0400. So do

Helen and Betsy. Let's all go home with me," said Sam.

III

I found out a lot later that he also worked part time in the Time Service. That was a real shocker, because I always thought of Time Servicemen as stuffy, upright, hopelessly virtuous types, square-jawed and clean-cut—overgrown Boy Scouts. And my black guru was and is anything but that. Of course, I had a lot to learn about the Time Service, as well as about Sam.

Since I had a few hours to kill in the sniffer palace he let me have a mask, free, and piped cheery hallucinations to me. When I came up and out, Sam and Helen and Betsy were dressed and ready to go. I had trouble recognizing the girls with their clothes on. Betsy for bosoms, was my mnemonic, but in their Missionary sheaths they were indistinguishable. We all went down three levels to Sam's place and plugged in. As the good fumes rose and clothes dropped away, I found Betsy again and we did what you might have expected us to do, and I discovered that eight nightly hours of total immersion in a tank of cognac gave her skin a certain burnished glow and did not affect her sensory responses in any negative way.

Then we sat in a droopy circle and smoked weed and the guru drew me out.

"I am a graduate student in Byzantine history," I declared.

"Fine, fine. Been there?"

"To Istanbul? Five trips."

"Not Istanbul. Constantinople."

"Same place," I said.

"Is it?"

"Oh," I said. "*Constantinople*. Very expensive."

"Not always," said black Sam. He touched his thumb to the ignition of a new weed, leaned forward tenderly, put it between my lips. "Have you come to Under New Orleans to study Byzantine history?"

"I came to run away from my job."

"Tired of Byzantium so soon?"

"Tired of being third assistant statutory law clerk to Judge Mattachine of the Manhattan County More Supreme Court, Upper."

"You said you were—"

"I know. Byzantine is what I *study*. Law clerk is what I *do*. Did."

"Why?"

"My uncle is Justice Elliot of the U.S. Higher Supreme Court. He thought I ought to get into a decent line of work."

"You don't have to go to law school to be a law clerk?"

"Not any more," I explained. "The machines do all the data retrieval, anyway. The clerks are just courtiers. They congratulate the judge on his brilliance, procure for him, submit to him, and so forth. I stuck it for eight days and podded out."

"You have troubles," Sam said sagely.

"Yes. I've got a simultaneous attack of restlessness, weltschmerz, tax liens, and unfocused ambition."

"Want to try for tertiary syphilis?" Helen asked.

"Not just now."

"If you had a chance to attain your heart's desire," said Sam, would you take it?"

"I don't know what my heart's desire is."

"Is that what you mean when you say you're suffering from unfocused ambitions?"

"Part of it."

"If you knew what your heart's desire was, would you lift a finger to seize it?"

"I would," I said.

"I hope you mean that," Sam told me, "because if you don't, you'll have your bluff called. Just stick around here."

He said it very aggressively. He was going to force happiness on me whether I liked it or not.

Sam gave me a three-hour sleepo and took the girls home. In the morning, after a scrub, I inspected the suite and observed that it was decorated with artifacts of many times and places: a Sumerian clay tablet, a stirrup cup from Peru, a goblet of Roman glass, a string of Egyptian faience beads, a medieval mace and suit of chain-mail, several copies of *The New-York Times* from 1852 and 1853, a shelf of books bound in blind-stamped calf, two Iroquois false-face masks, an immense array of Africana, and a good deal else, cluttering every available alcove, aperture, and orifice. In my fuddled way I assumed that Sam had antiquarian leanings and drew no deeper conclusions. A week later I noticed that everything in his collection seemed newly made. He is a forger of antiques, I told myself. "I am a part time employee of the Time Service," black Sam insisted.

IV

"The Time Service," I said, "is populated by square-jawed Boy Scouts. Your jaw is round."

"And my nose is flat, yes. And I am no Boy Scout. However, I am a part time employee of the Time Service."

"I don't believe it. The Time Service is staffed entirely by nice boys from Indiana and Texas. Nice white boys of all races, creeds, and colors."

"That's the Time Patrol," said Sam. "I'm a Time Courier."

"There's a difference?"

"There's a difference."

"Pardon my ignorance."

"Ignorance can't be pardoned. Only cured."

"Tell me about the Time Service."

"There are two divisions," Sam said. "The Time Patrol and the Time Couriers. The people who tell ethnic jokes end up in the Time Patrol. The people who invent ethnic jokes end up as Time Couriers. *Capisce?*"

"Not really."

"Man, if you're so dumb, why ain't you black?" Sam asked gently. "Time Patrolmen do the policing of paradoxes. Time Couriers take the tourists up the line. Couriers hate the Patrol, Patrol hates Couriers. I'm a Courier. I do the Mali-Ghana-Gao-Kush-Aksum-Kongo route in January and February, and in October and November I do Sumer, Pharaonic Egypt, and sometimes the Nazca-Mochica-Inca run. When they're shorthanded I fill in on Crusades, Magna Carta, 1066, and Agincourt. Three times now I've done the Fourth Crusade taking Constantinople, and twice the Turks in 1453. Eat your heart out, white folks."

"You're making this up, Sam!"

"Sure I am, sure. You see all this stuff here? Smuggled right down the line by yours truly, out past the Time Patrol, not a thing they suspected."

My eyes glistened. I sensed my unknown heart's desire vibrating just beyond my grasp. "Smuggle me up the line to Byzantium, Sam!"

"Go smuggle yourself. Sign on as a Courier."

"Could I?"

"They're always hiring. Boy, where's your *sense*? A graduate student in history, you call yourself, and you've never even thought of a Time Service job."

"I've thought of it," I said indignantly. "It's just that I never thought of it seriously. It seems—well, too *easy*. To strap on a timer and visit any era that ever was—that's cheating, Sam, do you know what I mean?"

"I know what you mean, but you don't know what you mean. I'll tell you your trouble, Jud. You're a compulsive loser."

I knew that. How did he know it so soon?

He said, "What you want most of all is to go up the line, like any other kid with two synapses and a healthy honker. So you turn your back on that, and instead of signing up you let them nail you with a fake job, which you run away from at the earliest possible opportunity. Where are you now? What's ahead? You're, what, 22 years old—"

"—24—"

"—and you've just unmade one career, and you haven't made move one on the other, and when I get tired of you I'll toss you out on your thumb, and what happens when the money runs dry?"

I didn't answer.

He went on, "I figure you'll run out of stash in six months, Jud. At that point you can sign up as stoker

for a rich widow, pick a good one out of the Throbbing Crotch Registry—"

"Yigg."

"Or you can join the Hallucination Police and help to preserve objective reality—"

"Yech."

"Or you can return to the More Supreme Court and surrender your lily-white to Judge Mattachine—"

"Blugh."

"Or you can do what you should have done all along, which is to enroll as a Time Courier. Of course, you won't do that, because you're a loser, and losers infallibly choose the least desirable alternative. Right?"

"Wrong, Sam."

"Crab."

"Are you trying to make me angry?"

"No, love." He lit a weed for me.

"I go on duty at the sniffer palace in half an hour. Would you mind oiling me?"

"Oil yourself, you anthropoid. I'm not laying a hand on your lovely black flesh."

"Ah! Aggressive heterosexuality rears its ugly head!"

He stripped to his jock and poured oil into his bath machine. The machine's arms moved in spidery circles and started to polish him to a high gloss.

"Sam," I said, "I want to join the Time Service."

V

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS

Name: Judson Daniel Elliott III

Place of Birth: Newer York

Date of Birth: 11 October 2035

Sex (M or F): M

Citizen Registry Number: 070-28-3479-

xx5-100089891

Academic Degrees—

Bachelor: Columbia '55

Master: Columbia '56

Doctor: Harvard, Yale, Princeton,
incomplete

Scholar Magistrate: _____

Other: _____

Height: 1 meter (s) 88 centimeters

Weight: 78 kg

Hair Color: black

Eye Color: black

Racial Index: 8.5 C+

Blood Group: BB 132

Marriages (List Temporary and Permanent Liaisons, in order of registration, and duration of each):

none

Acknowledged Offspring: none

Reason for Entering Time Service
(limit: 100 words):

To improve my knowledge of Byzantine culture, which is my special study area; to enlarge my acquaintance with human customs and behavior; to deepen my relationship to other individuals through constructive service; to offer the benefits of my education thus far to those in need of information; to satisfy certain romantic longings common to young men.

Names of Blood Relatives Currently
Employed by Time Service:

none

VI

Very little of the foregoing really mattered. I was supposed to keep the application on my person, like a talisman, in case anybody in the Time Service bureaucracy really wanted to see it as I moved through the stages of enrolling; but all that was actually necessary was my Citizen Registry Number, which gave the Time Service folk full access to everything else I had put on the form except my Reason for Entering Time Service, and much more besides. At the push of a node the master data center would disgorge not only my height, weight, date of birth, hair color, eye color, racial index, blood group, and academic background, but also a full list of all illnesses I had suffered, vaccinations, my medical and psychological checkups, sperm count, mean body temperature by seasons, size of all bodily organs, all my places of residence, my kin to the fifth degree and the fourth generation, current bank balance, pattern of financial behavior, tax status, voting performance, record of arrests if any, preference in pets, shoe size, et cetera. Privacy is out of fashion, they tell me.

Sam waited in the waiting room, molesting the hired help, while I was filling out my application. When I had finished my paperwork he rose and conducted me down a spiraling ramp into the depths of the Time Service building. Squat hammerheaded robots laden with equipment and documents rolled beside us on the ramp. A door in the wall opened and a secretary emerged; as she crossed our path Sam gave her a lusty tweaking of the nipples and she ran away shrieking. He goosed one of the robots, too. They call it

appetite for life. "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here," Sam said. "I play the part well, don't I?"

"What part? Satan?"

"Virgil," he said. "Your friendly spade guide to the nether regions. Turn left here."

We stepped onto a dropshaft and went down a long way.

We appeared in a large steamy room at least fifty meters high and crossed a swaying rope bridge far above the floor. "How," I asked, "is a new man who doesn't have a guide supposed to find his way around in this building?"

"With difficulty," said Sam.

The bridge led us into a glossy corridor lined with gaudy doors. One door had SAMUEL HERSHKOWITZ lettered on it in cutsey psychedelic lettering, real antiquarian stuff. Sam jammed his face into the scanner slot and the door instantly opened. We peered into a long narrow room, furnished in archaic fashion with blowup plastic couches, a spindly desk, even a typewriter, for God's sake. Samuel Hershkowitz was a long, long, lean individual with a deeply tanned face, curling mustachios, sideburns, and a yard of chin. At the sight of Sam he came capering across the desk and they embraced furiously.

"Soul brother!" cried Samuel Hershkowitz.

"Landsmann!" yelled Sam the guru.

They kissed cheekwise. They hugged. They pounded shoulders. Then they split and Hershkowitz looked at me and said, "Who?"

"New recruit. Jud Elliott. Naive, but he'll do for the Byzantium run. Knows his stuff."

"You have an application, Elliott?"

Hershkowitz asked.

I produced it. He scanned it briefly and said, "Never married, eh? You a pervo-deviant?"

"No, sir."

"Just an ordinary queer?"

"No, sir."

"Scared of girls?"

"Hardly, sir. I'm just not interested in taking on the permanent responsibilities of marriage."

"But you *are* hetero?"

"Mainly, sir," I said, wondering if I had said the wrong thing.

Samuel Hershkowitz tugged at his sideburns. "Our Byzantium couriers have to be above reproach, you understand. The prevailing climate up that particular line is, well, steamy. You can futz around all you want in the year 2059, but when you're a Courier you need to maintain a sense of perspective. Amen. Sam, you vouch for this kid?"

"I do."

"That's good enough for me. But let's just run a check, to be sure he isn't wanted for a capital crime. We had a sweet, clean-cut kid apply last week, asking to do the Golgotha run, which of course requires real tact and saintliness, and when I looked into him I found he was wanted for causing protoplasmic decay in Indiana. And several other offenses. So, thus. We check." He activated his data outlet, fed in my identification number, and got my dossier on his screen. It must have matched what I had put on my application, because after a quick inspection he blanked it, nodded, keyed in some notations of his own, and opened his desk. He took from it a smooth flat tawny thing that looked like a truss and tossed it to me.

"Drop your pants and put this on," he said. "Show him how, Sam."

I pressed the snap and my trowsers fell. Sam wrapped the truss around my hips and clasped it in place; it closed seamlessly upon itself as though it had always been one piece. "This," said Sam, "is your timer. It's cued in to the master shunt system, synchronized to pick up the waves of transport impulses as they come forth. As long as you don't let it run out of phlogiston, this little device is capable of moving you to any point in time within the last seven thousand years."

"No earlier?"

"Not with this model. They aren't allowing unrestricted travel to the prehistoric yet, anyway. We've got to open this thing up era by era, with care. Attend to me, now. The operating controls are simplicity itself. Right here is a microswitch that controls backward and forward motion. In order to travel, you merely describe a semicircle with your thumb against this pressure-point: from hip toward navel to go back in time, from navel toward hip to go forward. On this side is your fine tuning, which takes some training to use. You see the laminated dial—year, month, day, hour, minute? Yes, you've got to squint a little to read it; that can't be helped. The years are calibrated in B.P.—Before Present—and the months are numbered, and so on. The trick lies in being able to make an instant calculation of your destination—843 years B.P., five months, eleven days, and so on—and setting the dials. It's mostly arithmetic, but you'd be surprised how many people can't translate "February 11, 1192" into a quantity of years, months, and days ago.

Naturally you'll have to master the knack if you're going to be a Courier, but don't worry about that now."

He paused and looked up at Hershkowitz, who said to me, "Sam is now going to give you your preliminary disorientation tests. If you pass, you're in."

Sam strapped on a timer also.

"Ever shunted before?" he asked.

"Never."

"We gonna have some fun, baby."

He leered. "I'll set your dial for you. You wait till I give the signal, then use the left-hand switch to turn the timer on. Don't forget to pull your pants back up."

"Before or after I shunt?"

"Before," he said. "You can work the switch through your clothes. It's never a good idea to arrive in the past with your pants around your knees. You can't run fast enough that way. And sometimes you've got to be ready to run the second you get there."

VII

Sam set my dial. I pulled up my pants. He touched his hand lightly to the left-hand side of his abdomen and vanished. I described an arc from my hip to my navel on my own belly with two fingertips. I didn't vanish. Samuel Hershkowitz did.

He went wherever candle flames go when they're snuffed, and in the same instant Sam popped back into view beside me, and the two of us stood looking at each other in Hershkowitz' empty office. "What happened?" I said. "Where is he?"

"It's half past eleven at night," said Sam. "He doesn't work overtime,

you know. We left him two weeks down the line when we made our shunt. We're riding the time-winds now, boy."

"We've gone back two weeks into the past?"

"We've gone two weeks up the line," Sam corrected. "Also half a day, which is why it's nighttime now. Let's go take a walk around the city."

We left the Time Service building and rose to the third level of Under New Orleans. Sam didn't seem to have any special destination in mind. We stopped at a bar for a dozen oysters apiece; we downed a couple of beers; we winked at tourists. Then we reached Under Bourbon Street and I realized suddenly why Sam had chosen to go back to this night, and I felt a tingle of fear and started suddenly to sweat. Sam laughed. "It always gets the new ones right around this point, Jud-baby. This is where most of the washouts wash out."

"I'm going to meet myself!" I cried.

"You're going to see yourself," he corrected. "You better take good care not to *meet* yourself, not ever, or it'll be all up for you. The Time Patrol will use you up if you pull any such trick."

"Suppose my earlier self happens to see me, though?"

"Then you've had it. This is a test of your nervous system, man, and you better have the juice turned on. Here we go. You recognize that dumb-looking honky coming up the street?"

"That's Judson Daniel Elliott III."

"Yeah, man! Ever see anything so stupid in your life? Back in the shadows, man. Back in the shadows. White folks there, he ain't smart, but he ain't *blind*."

We huddled in a pool of darkness and I watched, sickbellied, as Judson Daniel Elliott III, fresh off the pod out of Newer York, came wandering up the street toward the sniffer palace on the corner, suitcase in hand. I observed the slight slackness of his posture and the hayseed outturning of his toes as he walked. His ears seemed amazingly large and his right shoulder was a trifle lower than his left. He looked gawky; he looked like a rube. He went past us and paused before the sniffer palace, staring intently at the two nude girls in the tank of cognac. His tongue slid forth and caressed his upper lip. He rocked on the balls of his toes. He rubbed his chin.

He entered the sniffer palace.

"How do you feel?" Sam asked me.

"Shaky."

"At least you're honest. It always hits them hard, the first time they go up the line and see themselves. You get used to it, after a while. How does he look to you?"

"Like a clod."

"That's standard too. Be gentle with him. He can't help not knowing all the things you know. He's younger than you are, after all."

Sam laughed softly. I didn't. I was still dazed by the impact of seeing myself come up that street. I felt like my own ghost. Preliminary disorientations, Hershkowitz had said. Yes.

"Don't worry," said Sam. "You're doing fine."

His hand slipped familiarly into the front of my pants and I felt him make a small adjustment on my timer. He did the same to himself. He said, "Let's shunt up the line."

He vanished. I followed him up the line. A blurry half-instant later we

stood side by side again, on the same street, at the same time of night.

"When are we?" I asked.

"Twenty-four hours previous to your arrival in New Orleans. There's one of you here and one of you in Newer York, getting ready to take the pod south. How does that atch you?"

"Crosswise," I said. "But I'm adapting."

"There's more to come. Let's go home, now."

He took me to his flat. There was nobody there, because the Sam of this time slot was at work at the sniffer palace. We went into the bathroom and Sam adjusted my timer again, setting it 31 hours forward. "Shunt," he said, and we went down the line together and came out still in Sam's bathroom, on the next night. I heard the sound of drunken laughter coming from the next room; I heard hoarse gulping cries of lust. Swiftly Sam shut the bathroom door and palmed the seal. I realized that I was in the next room sexing with Betsy or Helen, and I felt fear return.

"Wait here," Sam said crisply, "and don't let anybody in unless he knocks two longs and a short. I'll be right back, maybe."

He went out. I locked the bathroom door after him. Two or three minutes passed. There came two long knocks and a short, and I opened up. Grinning, Sam said, "It's safe to peek. Nobody's in any shape to notice us. Come on."

"Do I have to?"

"If you want to get into the Time Service you do."

We slipped out of the bathroom and went to sightsee the orgy. I had to fight to keep from coughing as the

fumes hit my unready nostrils. In Sam's livingroom I confronted acres of bare writhing flesh. In a kind of cold terror I watched myself having Betsy. Although I've seen plenty of copulation scenes before, in the tridim shows, on the beaches, occasionally at parties, this was the first time I had ever witnessed myself in the act, and I was shattered by the grotesqueness of it, the idiot gaspings, the contorted features, the sweaty humpings. And my terror ebbed as I grew accustomed to the sight, and I found a cold clinical detachment stealing over me, and my fear-born perspiration dried and at last I stood there with my arms folded, coolly studying the activities on the floor. Sam smiled and nodded as if to tell me that I had passed a test. He reset my timer once more and we shunted together.

The livingroom was empty of fornicators and free of fumes. "When are we now?" I asked.

He said, "We're back 31 hours and 30 minutes. In a little while now, you and I are going to come walking into the bathroom, but we won't stay around to wait for that. Let's go up on top of the town."

We journeyed uplevel to Old New Orleans, under the starry sky.

The robot who monitors the comings and goings of the eccentrics who like to go outdoors made note of us, and we passed through, into the quiet streets. Here was the real Bourbon Street; here were the crumbling buildings of the authentic French Quarter. Spy-eyes mounted on the lacy grillwork balconies watched us, for in this deserted area the innocent are at the mercy of the depraved, and tourists are protected, through constant sur-

veillance, against the marauders who prowl the surface city. We didn't stay long enough to get into trouble, though. Sam looked around, considering things a bit, and positioned us against a building wall. As he adjusted my timer for another shunt I said, "What happens if we materialize in space that's already occupied by somebody or something?"

"Can't," Sam said. "The automatic buffers cut in and we get kicked back instantly to our starting point. But it wastes energy, and the Time Service doesn't like that, so we always try to find a nonconflicting area before we jump. Up against a building wall is usually pretty good, provided you can be fairly sure that the wall was in the same position at the time you're shunting to."

"When are we going to now?"

"Shunt and see," he said, and jumped. I followed.

The city came to life. People in twentieth-century clothes strolled the streets: men wearing neckties, women with skirts that came down to their knees, no real flesh showing. Automobiles crashing along emitting fumes that made me want to vomit. Horns honking. Drills digging up the ground. Noise, stench, ugliness. "Welcome to 1961," Sam said. "John F. Kennedy has just been sworn in as President. The very first Kennedy, dig? That thing up there is a jet airplane. That's a traffic light. It tells when it's safe for you to cross the street. Those up here are street lights. They work by electricity. There are no underlevels. This is the whole thing, the city of New Orleans, right here. How do you like it?"

"It's an interesting place to visit. I

wouldn't want to live here."

"You feel dizzy? Sick? Revolted?"

"I'm not sure."

"You're allowed. You always feel a little temporal shock on your first look at the past. It somehow seems smellier and more chaotic than you expect. Some applicants cave in the moment they get into a decently distant shunt up the line."

"I'm not caving."

"Good boy."

I studied the scene, the women with their breasts and rumps encased in tight exoskeletons under their clothing, the men with their strangled, florid faces, the squalling children. Be objective, I told myself. You are a student of other times, other cultures.

Someone pointed at us and screamed, "Hey, looka the beatniks!"

"Onward," Sam said. "They've noticed us."

He adjusted my timer. We jumped.

Same city. A century earlier. Same buildings, genteel and timeless in their pastels. No traffic lights, no drills, no street lights. Instead of automobiles zooming along the streets that bordered the old quarter, there were buggies.

"We can't stay," said Sam. "It's 1858. Our clothes are too weird, and I don't feel like pretending I'm a slave. Onward."

We shunted.

The city vanished. We stood in a kind of swamp. Mists rose in the south. Spanish moss clung to graceful trees. A flight of birds darkened the sky.

"The year is 1382," said the guru. "Those are passenger pigeons overhead. Columbus' grandfather is still a virgin."

Back and back we hopped. 897. 441. 97. Very little changed. A couple

of naked Indians wandered by at one point. Sam bowed in a courteous way. They nodded affably to us, scratched themselves and sauntered on. Visitors from the future did not excite them greatly. We shunted. "This is the year 1 A.D.," said Sam. We shunted. "We have gone back an additional twelve months and are now in 1 B.C. The possibilities for arithmetical confusion are great. But if you think of the year as 2059 B.P., and the coming year as 2058 B.P., you won't get into any trouble."

He took me back to 5800 B.P. I observed minor changes in climate; things were drier at some points than at others, drier and cooler. Then we came forward, hopping in easy stages, five hundred years at a time. He apologized for the unvarying nature of the environment; things are more exciting, he promised me, when you go up the line in the Old World. We reached 2058 and made our way to the Time Service building, entering Hershkowitz' empty office. We halted for a moment while Sam made a final adjustment on our timers.

"This has to be done carefully," he explained. "I want us to land in Hershkowitz' office thirty seconds after we left it. If I'm off even a little, we'll meet our departing selves and I'll be in real trouble."

"Why not play it safe and set the dial to bring us back five minutes later, then?"

"Professional pride," Sam said.

We shunted down the line from an empty Hershkowitz office to one in which Hershkowitz sat behind his desk, peering forward at the place where we had been—for him—thirty seconds earlier.

"Well?" he said.

Sam beamed. "The kid has guts. I say hire him."

VIII

And so they took me on as a novice Time Serviceman, in the Time Courier division. The pay wasn't bad; the opportunities were limitless. First, though, I had to undergo my training. They don't let novices schlep tourists around the past just like that.

For a week *nothing much happened*. Sam went back to work at the sniffer palace and I lounged around. Then I was called down to the Time Service headquarters to begin taking instruction.

There were eight in my class, all of us novices. We made a pretty disreputable crew. In age we ranged from early twenties to—I think—late seventies; in sex we ranged from male to female with every possible gradation between; in mental outlook we were all something on the rapacious side. Our instructor, Najeeb Dajani, wasn't much better. He was a Syrian whose family had converted to Judaism after the Israeli conquest, for business reasons, and he wore a glittering, conspicuous Star of David as an insignia of his faith; but in moments of abstraction or stress he was known to evoke Allah or swear by the Prophet's beard, and I don't know if I'd really trust him on the board of directors of my synagogue, if I had a synagogue. Dajani looked like a stage Arab, swarthy and sinister, with dark sunglasses at all times, an array of massive gold rings on twelve or thirteen of his fingers, and a quick, amiable smile that showed several rows of very white teeth. I later found out

that he had been taken off the lucrative Crucifixion run and demoted to this instructorship for a period of six months, by orders of the Time Patrol, by way of punishment. It seems he had been conducting a side business in fragments of the True Cross, peddling them all up and down the time-lines. The rules don't allow a Courier to take advantage of his position for private profit. What the Patrol especially objected to was not that Dajani was selling fake relics, but that he was selling authentic ones.

We began with a history lesson.

"Commercial time-travel," Dajani said, "has been functioning about twenty years now. Of course, research into the Benchley Effect began toward the end of the last century, but you understand that the government could not permit private citizens to venture into temponautics until it was ruled to be perfectly safe. In this way the government benevolently oversees the welfare of all."

Dajani emitted a broad wink, visible through the dark glasses as a corrugation of his brow.

Miss Dalessandro in the front row belched in contempt.

"You disagree?" Dajani asked.

Miss Dalessandro, who was a plump but curiously small-breasted woman with black hair, distinct Sapphic urges, and a degree in the history of the industrial revolution, began to reply, but Dajani smoothly cut her off and continued, "The Time Service, in one of whose divisions you have enrolled, performs several important functions. To us is entrusted the care and maintenance of all Benchley Effect devices; also, our research division constantly endeavors to improve the technological

substructure of time transport, and in fact the timer now in use was introduced only four years ago. To our own division—the Time Couriers—is assigned the task of escorting citizens into the past." He folded his hands complacently over his paunch and studied the interlocking patterns of his gold rings. "Much of our activity is concerned with the tourist trade. This provides our economic basis. For large fees, we take groups of eight or ten sightseers on carefully conducted trips to the past, usually accompanied by one Courier, although two may be sent in unusually complex situations. At any given moment in now-time, there may be a hundred thousand tourists scattered over the previous millennia, observing the Crucifixion, the signing of the Magna Carta, the assassination of Lincoln, and such events. Because of the paradoxes inherent in creating a cumulative audience for an event located at a fixed position in the time-stream, we are faced with an increasingly difficult task, and limit our tours accordingly."

"Would you explain that, sir?" said Miss Dalessandro.

"At a later meeting," Dajani replied. He went on, "Naturally, we must not confine time travel exclusively to tourists. Historians must have access to all significant events of the past, since it is necessary to revise all existing views of history in the light of the revelation of the real story. We set aside out of the profits of our tourist business a certain number of scholarships for qualified historians, enabling them to visit periods of their research without cost. These tours, too, are conducted by Couriers; however, you will not be concerned with this aspect

of our work. We anticipate assigning all of you who qualify as Couriers to the tourist division.

"The other division of the Time Service is the Time Patrol, whose task it is to prevent abuses of Benchley Effect devices and to guard against the emergence of paradoxes. At our next lesson we will consider in detail the nature of these paradoxes and how they may be avoided. Dismissed."

IX

At our next lesson we considered in detail the nature of the time-travel paradoxes and how they may be avoided.

"Our greatest challenge," Dajani began, "lies in maintaining the sanctity of now-time. The development of Benchley Effect devices has opened a Pandora's Box of potential paradoxes. No longer is the past a fixed quantity, since we are free now to travel up the line to any given point and alter the so-called 'real' events. The results of such alteration would of course be catastrophic, creating a widening vector of disruption that, by the time it had reached our own era, might transform every aspect of society." Dajani yawned politely. "Consider, if you will, the consequences of permitting a time-traveler to journey to the year 600 and assassinate the youthful Mohammad. The whole dynamic movement of Islam thus will be arrested at its starting point; there will be no Arab conquest of the Near East and southern Europe; the Crusades will not have taken place; millions who died as a result of the Islamic invasions will now not have died, and numerous lines of progeny that would not otherwise have existed at all will come into

being, with incalculable effects. All this stems simply from the slaying of a certain young merchant of Mecca. And therefore—"

"Perhaps," suggested Miss Dalessandro, "there's a Law of Conservation of History which would provide that if Mohammed didn't happen, some other charismatic Arab would arise and play precisely the same role?"

Dajani glowered at her.

"We do not care to risk it," he said. "We prefer to see to it that all 'past' events, as recorded in the annals of history as compiled prior to the era of time-travel, go untouched. For the past fifty years of now-time the entire previous span of history, thought to be fixed, has been potentially fluid; yet we struggle to keep it fixed. Thus we employ the Time Patrol to make certain that everything will happen in the past exactly as it *did* happen, no matter how unfortunate an event it might be. Disasters, assassinations, tragedies of all kinds must occur on schedule, for otherwise the future—our now-time—may be irreparably changed."

Miss Chambers said, "But isn't the very fact of our presence in the past a changing of the past?"

"I was about to reach that point," said Dajani, displeased. "If we assume that the past and present form a single continuum then obviously visitors from the twenty-first century *were* present at all the great events of the past, unobtrusively enough so that no mention of them found its way into the annals of the fixed-time era. So we take great care to camouflage everyone who goes up the line in the costume of the time being visited. One must watch the past without meddling, as a silent bystander,

as inconspicuous as possible. This is a rule that the Time Patrol enforces with absolute inflexibility. I will discuss the nature of that enforcement shortly.

"I spoke the other day of cumulative audience paradox. This is a severe philosophical problem which has not yet been resolved, and which I will present to you now purely as a theoretical exercise, to give you some insight into the complexities of our undertaking. Consider this: the first time-traveler to go up the line to view the Crucifixion of Jesus was the experimentalist Barney Navarre, in 2012. Over the succeeding two decades another fifteen or twenty experimentalists made the same journey. Since the commencement of commercial excursions to Golgotha in 2041, approximately one tourist group a month, or 100 tourists a year, has viewed the scene. Thus about 1800 individuals of the twenty-first century, so far, have observed the Crucifixion. Now, then: each of these groups is leaving from a different month, but *every one of them is converging on the same day!* If tourists continue to go up the line at a rate of 100 a year to see the Crucifixion, the crowd at Golgotha will consist of at least 10,000 time-travelers by the middle of the twenty-second century, and, assuming no increase in the permissible tourist trade, by the early thirtieth century some 100,000 time-travelers will have made the trip, all of them necessarily congregating simultaneously at the site of the Passion. Yet obviously no such crowds are present there now, only a few thousand Palestinians—when I say 'now,' I mean of course the time of the Crucifixion relative to now-time 2059—and just as obviously those

crowds will continue to grow in the centuries ahead of now-time. Taken to its ultimate, the cumulative audience paradox yields us the picture of an audience of billions of time-travelers piled up in the past to witness the Crucifixion, filling all the Holy Land and spreading out into Turkey, into Arabia, even to India and Iran. Similarly for every other significant event in human history: as commercial time-travel progresses, it must inevitably smother every event in a horde of spectators, yet at the original occurrence of those events, *no such hordes were present!* How is this paradox to be resolved?"

Miss Dalessandro had no suggestions. For once, she was stumped. So were the rest of us. So was Dajani. So are the finest minds of our era.

Meanwhile, the past fills up with time-traveling sightseers.

Dajani tossed one final twister at us before he let us go. "I may add," he said, "that I myself, as a Courier, have done the Crucifixion run twenty-two times, with twenty-two different groups. If you were to attend the Crucifixion yourselves tomorrow, you would find twenty-two Najeed Dajanis at the hill of Golgotha simultaneously, each of me occupying a different position at the event and explaining the happening to my clients. Is this multiplication of Dajanis not a fascinating thing to consider? Why are there not twenty-two Dajanis at loose in now-time? It stretches the intellect to revolve such thoughts. Dismissed, dear ladies and gentlemen, dismissed."

X.

I was troubled about those twenty-one extra Dajanis, but the smartalecks

in the class quickly figured out why they hadn't all jammed up together here in now-time. It had to do with the fundamental limitations of the Benchley Effect in achieving down-the-line, or forward, travel.

My classmate Mr. Burlingame explained it all to me after class.

When you go down the line, he told me, you can come forward only as far as you had previously jumped up the line, *plus* the amount of absolute time elapsed during your stay up the line. That is, if you jump from March 20, 2059, say, to the spring of 1801, and spend three months in 1801, you can come forward again as far as June 20, 2059. But you can't jump down the line to August, 2059, nor can you jump to 2159 or 20590.

There is no way at all to get into your own future.

I don't know why this is so. Mr. Burlingame placed his pale palm on my knee and gave me the theoretical substructure for it, but I was too busy fending him off to follow it.

In fact, although Dajani later spent three sessions simply instructing us on the mechanics of the Benchley Effect, I still can't say for sure how the whole thing works, or why, or even if. At times I suspect I've dreamed it all.

Anyway, there aren't twenty-two Dajanis in now-time because whenever Dajani made the Crucifixion run, he always jumped back to now-time at a point somewhat prior to his next departure for the past. He couldn't help himself about that; if you go up the line in January, spend a couple of weeks in an earlier era, and come back, you've got to land in January or maybe February of the year you

started from; and if your next jump isn't scheduled until March, there's no way you can overlap yourself.

So the Dajani who escorted tourists to Golgotha was always the "same" one, from the point of view of people in now-time. At the other end of the jump, though, a couple dozen Dajanis have been piling up, since he keeps jumping from different points in now-time to the same point in then-time. The same happens to anybody who makes repeated jumps to one spot up the line. This is the Paradox of Temporal Accumulation. You can have it.

When not wrestling with such paradoxes I passed my time pleasantly in pleasure, as usual. There were always plenty of willing girls hanging around Sam's place.

In those days I chased girls quite a bit. Obsessively, even. The pursuit occupied all my idle hours. It never occurred to me that it might be worthwhile for me to seek a relationship with a member of the opposite sex that was more than six inches deep. What they call "love."

Shallow, callow youth that I was, I wasn't interested in "love."

On the other hand maybe I wasn't so shallow. For now I've tried "love" and I don't see where I'm the happier for it. I'm a lot worse off than before, as a matter of fact.

Of course, nobody told me to fall in love with someone who lived up the line.

XI

Lieutenant Bruce Sanderson of the Time Patrol came to our class one day to explain to us the perils of daring to meddle with the fixity of past

time.

The lieutenant looked his part. He was the tallest man I had ever seen, with the widest shoulders and the squarest jaw. Most of the girls in the class had instant orgasms when he entered, as did Mr. Chudnik and Mr. Burlingame. He took a spreadlegged stance, back to the wall, ready for trouble. His uniform was gray. His hair was red and cut very short. His eyes were a soulless blue.

Dajani, himself guilty of transgressing, himself a victim of the Time Patrol's diligence, slithered into a corner of the classroom and yielded the floor. I saw him peering balefully at the lieutenant through his dark glasses.

"Now, then," Lieutenant Sanderson said, "you know that our big job involves maintaining the sanctity of now-time. We can't let all kinds of random changes get introduced into our past, because that'll mess up our present. So we have a Time Patrol that monitors the whole territory up the line and makes sure that everything happens according to the books. And I want to say, God bless the men who legislated the Time Patrol into existence."

"Amen," said the penitent Dajani.

"Mind you, it isn't that I'm thankful for the job I have," the lieutenant continued. "Although I am, because I think it's the most important job a human being can have, preserving the sanctity of his now-time. But when I say God bless the men who said we had to have a Time Patrol, it's because those men are responsible for saving everything that is true and good and precious about our existence. Do you know what might have happened with-

out a Time Patrol? What sort of things unscrupulous villains might have done? Let me give you a few examples.

"Such as going back and killing Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, all our great religious leaders, when they were still children and hadn't had time to formulate their wonderful and inspiring ideas.

"Such as warning the great villains of history of trouble in store for them, and thus allowing them to cheat destiny and continue doing harm to humanity.

"Such as stealing the art treasures of the past and preventing millions of people over many centuries from enjoying them.

"Such as engaging in fraudulent financial operations resulting in the bankrupting of millions of innocent investors who happened not to have information on future stock prices.

"Such as giving false advice to great rulers and leading them into terrible traps.

"I mention all these examples, my friends, because they are things that have *actually happened*. They all come from the files of the Time Patrol, believe it or not! In April, 2052, a young man from Bucharest used an illegally obtained timer to shunt up the line to 11 A.D. and poison Jesus Christ. In October, 2043, a citizen of Berlin traveled back to the year 1945 and rescued Adolf Hitler just before the Russians entered the city. In August, 2049, a woman from Nice jumped to the era of Leonardo da Vinci, stole the unfinished *Mona Lisa*, and hid it in her beach cabana. In September, 2055, a New York man journeyed to the summer of 1929 and netted close to a billion dollars by selling stock short. In January, 2051, a professor of military

history from Quebec journeyed to 1815 and, by marketing to the British what purported to be the French strategic program, caused the defeat of the Duke of Wellington by the forces of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo. And therefore—

"Wait a second!" I heard myself say. "Napoleon *didn't* win at Waterloo. Christ *wasn't* poisoned in 11 A.D. If the past was really changed as you just said, how come no effects of it have been felt in now-time?"

"Aha!" cried Lieutenant Sanderson. He was the best crier of "Aha!" I have ever heard. "The fluidity of the past, my friend, is a double-edged blade. If the past can be changed once, it can be changed many times. Now we come to the role of the Time Patrol.

"Let's consider the case of the deranged person who assassinated the young Jesus. As a result of this shocking deed, Christianity did not emerge, and much of the Roman Empire was ultimately converted to Judaism. The Jewish leaders of Rome were able to steer the empire away from its collapse of the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., turning it into a monolithic theocratic state that controlled all of western Europe. However, the Byzantine Empire did not develop in the east, which instead was ruled from Jerusalem by a schismatic Hebrew sect. In the tenth century a cataclysmic war between the forces of Rome and those of Jerusalem resulted in the annihilation of civilization and in the takeover of all of Europe and Asia by Turkish nomads, who proceeded to construct a totalitarian state that, by the twenty-first century, had become the most repressive in human history.

"You can see from this how devastating it can be to meddle with the past."

"Yes," I said, "but—"

Lieutenant Sanderson gave me a frigid smile. "You are about to observe that we do not, in fact, live under a repressive Turkish tyranny. I agree. Our present pattern of existence was saved by the following procedure.

"The murder of the young Jesus was detected by a Time Courier who went up the line late in April, 2052, escorting a party of tourists to witness the Crucifixion. When the group arrived at the time and place of the Crucifixion, they found two thieves undergoing execution; no one, however, had heard of Jesus of Nazareth. The Courier instantly notified the Time Patrol, which began a paradox search. Jesus' time-line was followed from birth through boyhood and was seen to be unchanged; but no trace of him could be found after mid-adolescence, and inquiry in the neighborhood finally turned up the information that he had died suddenly and mysteriously in the year 11. It was a simple matter then to maintain surveillance until we observed the arrival of the illegal time-traveler.

"What do you think we did then?"

Hands went up. Lieutenant Sanderson recognized Mr. Chudnik, who said, "You arrested the criminal five minutes before he could give the poison to Jesus, thus preventing the changing of history, and took him back down the line for trial."

Lieutenant Sanderson smiled genially. "Wrong," he said. "We let him give the poison to Jesus."

Upoar.

The Time Patrol man said benignly,

"As you surely know, the maximum penalty for unauthorized interference in past events is death—the only capital offense now recognized in law. But before so severe a penalty can be invoked, absolute proof of the crime is necessary. Therefore, whenever a crime of this kind is detected, Time Patrolmen allow it to proceed and surreptitiously make a full record of it."

"But how," Miss Dalessandro demanded, "does the past get unchanged that way?"

"Aha!" cried Lieutenant Sanderson. "Once we have a proper record of the commission of the crime, we can obtain a quick conviction and secure permission to carry out sentence. This was done. The Time Patrol investigators returned with their evidence to the night of April 4, 2052. This was the date of the departure up the line of the would-be murderer of Jesus. They presented their proof of the crime to the Time Patrol commissioners, who ordered the execution of the criminal. Time Patrol executioners were dispatched to the home of the criminal, seized his timer, and painlessly put him to death an hour before his intended trip into the past. Thus he was erased from the time-stream and the main current of the past was preserved, for in fact he did not make his trip and Jesus lived on to preach his creed. In this way—through detection of unlawful changes and eradication of the changers in advance of their departure up the line—we preserve the sanctity of now-time."

How beautiful, I thought.

I'm too easily satisfied. Miss Dalessandro, that arch-troublemaker, put up her fleshy hand, and when called on said, "I'd like one clarification,

though. Presumably when your Time Patrolmen returned to April, 2052, with the evidence of the crime, they were returning to a changed world run by Turkish dictators. Where would they find Time Patrol commissioners? Where would they even find the murderer? He might have ceased to exist as a consequence of his own crime, because by murdering Jesus he set in motion some train of events that eliminated his own ancestors. For that matter, maybe time-travel itself was never invented in that world where Jesus didn't live, and so the moment Jesus was killed all Time Patrolmen and Time Couriers and tourists would become impossibilities, and cease to exist."

Lieutenant Sanderson did not look pleased.

"You bring up," he said slowly, "a number of interesting subsidiary paradoxes. I'm afraid that the time at my disposal isn't sufficient to deal with them properly. Briefly, though: if the timecrime of 11 A.D. had not been detected relatively quickly, the focus of change would indeed have widened over the centuries and eventually transformed the entire future, possibly preventing the emergence of the Benchley Effect and the Time Patrol itself, leading to what we call the Ultimate Paradox, in which time travel becomes its own negation. In fact, though, the vast potential consequences of the poisoning of Jesus never occurred because of the detection of the crime by the Time Courier visiting the Crucifixion. Since that event took place in A.D. 33, only the years 11 to 33 were ever affected by the timecrime, and the changes created by the absence of Jesus from those years were insignifi-

cant, because Jesus' influence on history emerged only long after the Crucifixion. Meanwhile the retroactive deletion of the timecrime cancelled even the slight changes that had taken place in the 22-year period affected; those two decades were pinched off into another track of time, inaccessible to us and in effect nonexistent, and the basic and authentic track was restored in full continuity from 11 A.D. to the present."

Miss Dalessandro wasn't satisfied. "There's something circular here. Shouldn't the Ultimate Paradox have occurred all the way down the line, the instant Jesus was poisoned? How did any of the Couriers and Patrolmen manage to continue to exist, let alone to remember how the past *should* have gone? It seems to me that there ought not to be any way of correcting a timecrime sweeping enough to bring on the Ultimate Paradox."

"You forget, or perhaps you don't yet know," said Sanderson, "that time travelers currently up the line at the moment of a timecrime are unaffected by *any* change in the past, since they're detached from their time matrices. A time-traveler in transit is a drifting bubble of now-time ripped loose from the matrix of the continuum, immune to the transformations of paradox. This means that anyone currently up the line may observe and correct an alteration of the true past, and will continue to retain memories both of the temporary false condition and of his role in correcting it. Of course, any time-traveler leaving the sanctuary of the transit state is vulnerable once he comes back to his starting point down the line. That is, if you go up the line and kill your grandfather before his

marriage, you won't instantaneously wink out of existence, since you're shielded from paradox by the Benchley Effect. But the moment you return to the present you will cease *ever* to have existed, since as a result of your alteration of your own past you no longer have a time-link to the present. Clear?"

No, I thought. But I kept quiet.

Miss Dalessandro pressed onward. "Those in transit are protected by—" "The Paradox of Transit Displacement, we call it."

"The Paradox of Transit Displacement. They're encapsulated, and as they travel they're free to compare what they see with what they remember true time to have been like, and if necessary they can make changes to restore the true order if it's been changed."

"Yes."

"Why? Why should they be immune? I know I keep coming back to this point, but—"

Lieutenant Sanderson sighed. "Because," he said, "if they were affected by a past-change while they were in the past themselves, this would be the Ultimate Paradox: a time-traveler changing the era that produced time-travel. This is even more paradoxical than the Paradox of Transit Displacement. By the Law of Lesser Paradoxes, the Paradox of Transit Displacement, being less improbable, holds precedence. Do you see?"

"No, but—"

"I'm afraid I can't dwell on this in greater detail," said the Patrolman. "However, no doubt Mr. Dajani will go into these matters at later instruction sessions."

He gave Dajani a sickly smile and excused himself fast.

Dajani, you can bet on it, didn't deal with Miss Dalessandro's paradoxes properly, or at all. He found cunning ways to sidetrack her every time she brought the issue up. "You can be sure," he said, "that the past is restored whenever it is changed. The hypothetical worlds created by unlawful change cease retroactively to exist the moment the changer is apprehended. Q.E.D."

That didn't explain a damned thing. But it was the best explanation we ever got.

Do you have the feeling that the Time Patrol is trying to duck the issue?

XII

One thing they made clear to us was that *good* changes in the past are also forbidden. Dozens of people have been eliminated for trying to persuade Abe Lincoln to stay home from the theatre that night, or for trying to tell Jack Kennedy that he should for God's sake put the bulletproof bubble on his car.

They get wiped out, just like the murderers of Jesus and the rescuers of Hitler. Because it's just as deadly to the fabric of now-time to help Kennedy serve out his term as it would be to help Hitler rebuild the Third Reich.

Change is change, and even the virtuous changes can have unpredictably catastrophic results. "Just imagine," said Dajani, "that because Kennedy was not assassinated in 1963, the escalation of the Vietnamese War that in fact did take place under his successor did not occur, and so the lives of thousands of servicemen were spared. Suppose now that one of those men, who otherwise would have

died in 1965 or 1966, remained alive, became President of the United States in 1992, and embarked on an atomic war that brought about the destruction of civilization. You see why even supposedly beneficial alterations of the past must be prevented?"

We saw. We saw it over and over again.

We saw it until we were scared toothless of going into the Time Service, because it seemed inevitable that we would sooner or later do something up the line that would bring down on us the fatal wrath of the Time Patrol.

"Don't worry about it," Sam said. "The way they talk, the death penalty is inflicted a million times a day. Actually I don't think there have been fifty executions for timecrime in the past ten years. And all of those were real nuts, the kind whose mission it is to murder Mohammed."

"Then how does the Patrol keep the past from being changed?"

"They don't," said Sam. "It gets changed all the time. Despite the Time Patrol."

"Why doesn't our world change?"

"It does. In little ways." Sam laughed. "If a Time Courier gives Alexander the Great antibiotics and helps him to live to a ripe old age, that would be an intolerable change, and the Time Patrol would prevent it. But a lot of other stuff goes on all the time. Couriers recovering lost manuscripts, sleeping with Catherine the Great, collecting artifacts for resale in other eras. Your man Dajani was peddling the True Cross, wasn't he? They found out about him, but they didn't execute him. They just suspended him from his profitable run for a while and stuck him in a classroom. Most of the petty

tinkering never even gets discovered." He let his glance rove meaningfully over his collection of artifacts from the past. "As you get into this business, Jud, you'll find out that we're in constant intersection with past events. Every time a Time Courier steps on an ant in 2000 B.C. he's changing the past. Somehow we survive. The dumb bastards in the Time Patrol watch out for structural changes in history, but they leave the little crap alone. They have to. There aren't enough Patrolmen to handle everything."

"But that means," I said, "that we're building up a lot of tiny alterations in history, bit by bit, an ant here and a butterfly there, and the accumulation may someday cause a major change, and nobody will then be able to trace all the causes and put things back the way they ought to be!"

"Exactly."

"You don't sound worried about it," I said.

"Why should I be? Do I own the world? Do I give a damn if history gets changed?"

"You would if the change involved seeing to it that you never existed."

"There are bigger things to worry about, Jud. Like having a good time from day to day."

"Doesn't it scare you that someday you might just pop out of existence?"

"Someday I will," Sam said. "No maybes about it. If not sooner then later. Meanwhile I enjoy myself. Eat, drink, and be merry, kid. Let the yesterdays fall where they will."

XIII

When they were finished hammering the rules into our heads, they sent us

on trial runs up the line. All of us had already been into the past, of course, before beginning the instruction sessions; they had tested us to see if we had any psychological hangups about time-traveling. Now they wanted us to observe Couriers in actual service, and so they let us go along as hitchhikers with tour groups.

They split us up, so there wouldn't be more than two of us to each six or eight tourists. To save expense, they assigned us all to visit events right in New Orleans. (In order to shoot us back to the Battle of Hastings, say, they would have had to fly us to London first. Time travel doesn't include space travel; you have to be physically present in the place you want to reach, before you jump.)

New Orleans is a fine city, but it hasn't had all that many important events in its history, and I'm not sure why anybody would want to pay very good money to go up the line there when for about the same fee he could witness the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the fall of Constantinople, or the assassination of Julius Caesar. But the Time Service is willing to provide transport to any major historical event whatever—within certain limits of taste, I mean—for any group of at least eight tourists who have the stash for tickets, and I suppose the patriotic residents of New Orleans have every right to sightsee their city's own past, if they prefer.

So Mr. Chudnik and Miss Dalesandro were shipped to 1815 to cheer for Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans. Mr. Burlingame and Mr. Oliveira were transported to 1877 to watch the last of the Carpetbaggers thrown out. Mr. Hotchkiss and Mrs.

Notabene went off to 1803 to see the United States take possession of Louisiana after buying it from the French. And Miss Chambers and I went up the line to 1935 to view the assassination of Huey Long.

Assassinations are usually over in a hurry, and nobody goes up the line just to watch a quick burst of gunfire. What the Time Service was really offering these people was a five-day tour of Louisiana in the early twentieth century, with the gunning down of the Kingfish as its climax. We had six fellow travelers: three well-to-do Louisiana couples in their late fifties and early sixties. One of the men was a lawyer, one a doctor, one a big executive of Louisiana Power & Light Company. Our Time Courier was the right sort to shepherd these pillars of the establishment around: a sleek, bland character named Madison Jefferson Monroe. "Call me Jeff," he invited.

We had several orientation meetings before we went anywhere.

"These are your timers," said Jeff Monroe. "You keep them next to your skin at all times. Once you put them on in Time Service headquarters, you don't remove them again until you come back down the line. You bathe with them, sleep with them, perform—ah—all intimate functions while wearing them. The reason for this should be obvious. It would be highly disruptive to history if a timer were to fall into the hands of a twentieth century person; therefore we don't allow the devices out of your physical possession even for an instant."

("He's lying," Sam told me when I repeated this to him. "Somebody up the line wouldn't know what the hell to do with a timer. The real

reason is that sometimes the tourists have to get out of an era in a hurry, maybe to avoid being lynched, and the Courier can't take the risk that some of his people have left their timers in the hotel room. But he doesn't dare tell them that.")

The timers that Jeff Monroe distributed were a little different from the one I had worn the night Sam and I went jumping up the line. The controls were sealed in, and functioned only when the Courier sounded a master frequency. Sensible enough: The Time Service doesn't want tourists slipping away for time-jaunts on their own.

Our Courier spelled out at great length the consequences of changing the past, and begged us repetitiously not to rock any boats. "Don't speak unless spoken to," he said, "and even then confine any conversations with strangers to a minimum of words. Don't use slang; it won't be comprehensible. You may recognize other time-tourists; under no condition are you to speak to them or greet them in any way, and you should ignore any attention you may get from them. Anyone who breaks these regulations, no matter how innocently, may have his shunting permit revoked on the spot and may be returned at once to now-time. Understood?"

We nodded solemnly.

Jeff Monroe added, "Think of yourselves as Christians in disguise who have been smuggled into the holy Moslem city of Mecca. You're in no danger so long as you're not discovered; but if those about you find out what you are, you're in big trouble. Therefore it's to your advantage to keep your mouths shut while you're

up the line, to do a lot of seeing and a minimum of saying. You'll be all right as long as you don't call attention to yourselves."

(I learned from Sam that time-tourists very frequently get themselves into muddles with people living up the line, no matter how hard their Couriers try to avoid such incidents. Sometimes the trouble can be patched up with a few diplomatic words, often when the Courier explains apologetically to the offended party that the stranger is really a mental case. Sometimes it's not so easy, and the Courier has to order a quick evacuation of all the tourists; the Courier must remain behind until he has sent all his people safely down the line, and there have been several fatalities to Couriers in the line of duty, as a result. In extreme cases of tourist bungling the Time Patrol steps in and cancels the jump retroactively, plucking the careless traveler from the tour and thereby undoing the damage. Sam said, "It can really get one of these rich bastards furious when a Patrolman shows up at the last minute and tells him that he can't make the shunt, because if he does he'll commit some ferocious faux pas up the line. They just can't understand it. They promise to be good, and won't believe that their promise is worthless because their conduct is already a matter of record. The trouble with most of the dumb tourists is that they can't think four-dimensionally." "Neither can I, Sam," I said, baffled. "You will. You'd better," said Sam.)

Before we set out for 1935 we were given a quick hypnocoarse in the social background of the era. Pumped into us were data on the Depression, the

New Deal, the Long family of Louisiana, Huey Long's rise to fame, his "Share Our Wealth" program of taking from the rich and giving to the poor, his feud with President Franklin Roosevelt, his dream of taking the Presidency himself in 1936, his flamboyant disregard for traditions, his demagogic appeal to the masses. We also got enough incidental details on life in 1935—celebrities, sports developments, the stock market—so we wouldn't feel hopelessly out of context there.

Lastly, they fitted us out in 1935 wardrobes. We strutted around giggling and quipping at the sight of ourselves in those quaint rigs. Jeff Monroe, checking us out, reminded the men about buttoned flies and how to use them, reminded the women that it was sternly prohibited to reveal the breasts from the nipple down, and urged us strenuously to keep in mind at all times that we were entering a staunchly puritanical era where neurotic repression was regarded as a virtue and our normal freedoms of behavior were looked upon as sinful and shameless.

We were ready, finally.

They took us uplevel to Old New Orleans, since it wouldn't have been healthy to make our jump from one of the underlevels. They had set up a room in a boardinghouse on North Rampart Street for shunting to the twentieth century.

"Here we go up the line," said Madison Jefferson Monroe, and gave the signal that activated our timers.

XIV

Suddenly, it was 1935.

We didn't notice any changes in

the dingy room we were in, but yet we knew we were up the line.

We wore tight shoes and funny clothes, and we carried real cash money, United States Dollars, because our thumbprints weren't legal tender here. The advance man of the tour had booked us into a big New Orleans hotel on Canal just at the edge of the old Franch quarter, for the first part of our stay, and after Jeff Monroe had given us a final warning to be circumspect, we went out and walked around the corner to it.

The automobile traffic was fantastic for this supposedly "depressed" year. So was the din. We strolled along, two by two, Jeff leading the way. We stared at things a lot, but no one would get suspicious about that. The locals would simply guess that we were tourists just down from Indiana. Nothing about our curiosity marked us particularly as tourists just down from 2059.

Thibodeaux, the power company man, couldn't get over the sight of power lines right out in the open, dangling from post to post. "I've read about such things," he said several times, "but I never really believed them!"

The weather gave us trouble. We had never been exposed to real humidity before; there isn't any in the undercities, of course, and only a lunatic goes up to surface level when the climate is sour. So we sweated and labored.

There wasn't any air-conditioning in the hotel, either. I think it may not have been invented yet.

Jeff checked us all in at the hotel. When he was through signing the register, the desk clerk, who of course

was human and not a computer terminal, banged a bell and yelled, "Front!" and a platoon of friendly black bellhops came over to get our luggage.

I overheard Mrs. Bienvenu, the lawyer's wife, whisper to her husband, "Do you think they're slaves?"

"Not here!" he said fiercely. "The slaves were freed seventy years ago!"

The desk clerk must have overheard that. I wonder what he made of it.

The Courier had booked Flora Chambers and me into one room. He explained that he had registered us as Mr. and Mrs. Elliott, because it wasn't permissible to let an unmarried couple share the same hotel room even if they were part of the same tour party. Flora gave me a pale but hopeful smile and said, "We'll pretend we're on a temporary."

Monroe glared at her. "We don't talk about down-the-line customs here!"

"They don't have temporary liaisons in 1935?"

"Shut up!" he hissed.

We unpacked and bathed and went out to see the town. We did Basin Street and heard some respectable primitive jazz. Then we walked a few blocks over to Bourbon Street for drinks and a strip-tease. The place was full; and it amazed us all that grown men and women would sit around for a full hour, enduring a lot of indifferent music and polluted atmosphere, simply to wait for a girl to come out and take off some of her clothes.

Our drinks and other nightclub charges were all put on one bill, which Jeff Monroe always paid. The Time Service didn't want us ignorant tour-

ists handling unfamiliar currencies except when absolutely necessary. The Courier also deftly fended off drunks who kept invading our group, beggars, soliciting prostitutes, and other challenges to our ability to handle the social situations 1935 presented.

"It's hard work," Flora Chambers observed, "being a Courier."

"But think of all the free traveling you get to do," I said.

We were profoundly awed by the ugliness of the people up the line. In an intellectual way we realized that there were no helix parlors here, that cosmetic microsurgery was unknown, and that esthetic genetics, if it had been heard of at all in 1935, would have been regarded as a fascist or communist conspiracy against the right of free men to have ugly children. Nevertheless, we couldn't help registering surprise and dismay at the mismatched ears, the pockmarked skins, the distorted teeth, the bulging noses, of these unprogrammed and unedited people. The plainest member of our group was a theatrical beauty compared to the 1935 norm.

We pitied them for having to live in their cramped, dark little era.

When we got back to our hotel room I was a little drunk.

Madison Jefferson Monroe had carefully allotted each of us one alcoholic drink during the whole evening. Despite all temptations, we weren't allowed a second, and had to stick to soft drinks the rest of the time. He couldn't take the risk that we might say something dangerous under the influence of alcohol, a substance we weren't really accustomed to. As it is, even that one drink was enough to loosen some tongues and melt some brains, and a

few remarks slipped out which, if they had been overheard, could have caused trouble.

It astounded me to see the twentieth-century people drink so much without collapsing.

("Get used to alcohol," Sam had urged me. "It's the favorite mind-poison in most places up the line. Develop a tolerance for it or you may have problems." "No drugs?" I asked. "Well, you'll find some weed here and there, but nothing really psychedelic. No sniffer palaces anywhere. Learn to drink, Jud. Learn to drink.")

Later that night Jeff Monroe came to our room. Jeff and I talked for a long while about the problems of being a Courier. I rather got to like him for all his slickness and blandness.

He seemed to enjoy his work. His specialty was twentieth-century United States, and the only thing he regretted was the wearying routine of covering the assassinations. "Nobody wants to see anything else," he complained. "Dallas, Los Angeles, Memphis, New York, Chicago, Baton Rouge, Cleveland, over and over again. I can't tell you how sick I am of muscling into the crowd by that overpass, and pointing out that window on the sixth floor, and watching that poor woman crawling onto the back of that car. At least the Huey Long thing is reasonably untouched. But there are twenty of me in Dallas by now. Don't people want to see the *happy* parts of the twentieth century?"

"Were there any?" I asked.

XV

We had breakfast at Brennan's and dinner at Antoine's, and had a tour of the Garden District, and came back to

the old town to visit the cathedral in Jackson Square, and then we walked down to have a look at the Mississippi. We also went to see Clark Gable and Jean Harlow in *Red Dust* at a movie house, visited the post office and the public library, bought a lot of newspapers (which are permissible souvenirs), and spent a few hours listening to the radio. We rode the Streetcar Named Desire and Jeff took us motoring in a hired automobile. He offered to let us drive, but we were all terrified of taking the wheel, after watching him going through the intricate routines of changing gears. And we did a lot of other twentieth century things. We really soaked up the flavor of the era.

Then we went up to Baton Rouge to watch Senator Long get killed.

We got there on Saturday, September 7, and took rooms in what Jeff swore was the finest hotel in the city. The legislature was in session, and Senator Huey had come down from Washington to run things. We hovered around town aimlessly until late Sunday afternoon. Then Jeff got us ready to see the show.

He had donned a thermoplastic disguise. His pink, regular face now was pocked and sallow, he had a mustache, and he wore dark glasses that he might have borrowed from Dajani. "This is the third time I've conducted this tour," he explained to us. "I think it might look bad if somebody noticed identical triplets standing in the corridor when Huey gets shot." He warned us to pay no attention to any of the other Jeff Monroes we might see at the assassination; he, pockmarks and mustache and glasses, was our authentic Courier and the other two were not to be

approached.

Toward evening we strolled over to the colossal 34-story state capitol building and casually wandered in—sightseers, here to admire Huey's \$5,000,000 edifice. Unobtrusively we entered. Jeff checked the time every few seconds.

He positioned us where we'd have a good view while still keeping out of range of the bullets.

We couldn't help noticing other groups of sightseers slouching into positions nearby. I saw a man who was unmistakably Jeff Monroe standing with one group; another group was clustered around a man of the same size and physique who, however, wore metal-rimmed glasses and had a plum-colored birthmark on one cheek. We made an elaborate show of not looking at these other people. They worked hard at not looking at us.

I worried about the Cumulative Paradox. It seemed to me that everybody who would ever come up the line to witness Huey Long's assassination should be right here now—thousands of people, maybe, all crowding round, jostling for a view. Yet there were only a few dozen, representing those who had set out from 2059 and earlier. Why weren't the others here? Was time so fluid that the same event could be played off infinitely often, for a larger audience each time?

"Here he comes," Jeff whispered.

The Kingfish hurried toward us, with his bodyguard close behind. He was short and chubby, with a florid face, a snub nose, orange hair, heavy lips, a deeply cleft chin. I told myself that I could sense the power of the man, and wondered if I might be deluding myself. As he approached he scratched his left buttock, said some-

thing to a man at his left and coughed. His suit was slightly rumpiled; his hair was unruly.

Since we had been coached by our Courier, we knew where to look for the assassin. On a murmured signal from Jeff—not before!—we turned our heads and saw Dr. Carl Austin Weiss detach himself from the crowd, step up to the Senator, and push a .22 automatic pistol into his stomach. He fired one shot. Huey, surprised, fell back, mortally wounded. His bodyguards instantly drew their guns and killed the assassin. Gleaming puddles of blood began to form; people screamed; the red-faced bodyguards pushed at us, hammered at us, told us to get back, get back, get back!

That was it. The event we had come to see was over.

It had seemed unreal, a playback of ancient history, a clever but not quite convincing tridim. We were impressed with the ingenuity of the process, but we were not awed by the impact of the event.

Even while the bullets had been flying, none of it had seemed completely true to us.

Yet those bullets had been real bullets, and if they had hit us, we would have died real deaths.

And for the two men lying on the capitol's polished floor, it had been an extremely real event.

XVI

I went on four more training missions before they certified me as a Time Courier. All my jumps were made in the New Orleans area. I got to know the history of that area a lot better than I ever thought I would.

The third of these trips was to 1803, the Louisiana Purchase run. I was the only trainee. There were seven tourists. Our Courier was a hardfaced little man named Sid Buonocore. When I mentioned his name to Sam, Sam guffawed and said, "That shady character!"

"What's shady about him?"

"They used to have him on the Renaissance run. Then the Time Patrol caught him pimping lady tourists to Cesare Borgia. The tourist gals paid him nicely, and so did Cesare. Buonocore claimed he was just doing his job—letting his girls get a deeper experience of the Renaissance, you know. But they pulled him back here and stuck him on Louisiana Purchase."

"Is a Courier supposed to supervise the sex life of his tourists?" I asked.

"No, but he isn't supposed to encourage transtemporal fornication, either."

I found the encourager of transtemporal fornication to be an engagingly rakish sort. Buonocore was a long way from handsome, but he had an aura of omnivorous sexuality about him that I had to admire. And his high regard for his own welfare was so obvious that it had a certain rapacious charm. You can't applaud a skulking pickpocket, but you can cheer an out-and-out brigand. That was what Sid Buonocore was.

He was a capable Courier, besides. He slipped us cunningly into 1803 New Orleans in the guise of a party of Dutch traders making a market tour; as long as we didn't meet a real Hollander we were safe, and our "Dutch" label covered the oddities of our futuristic accents. We strode around town uncomfortably garbed in

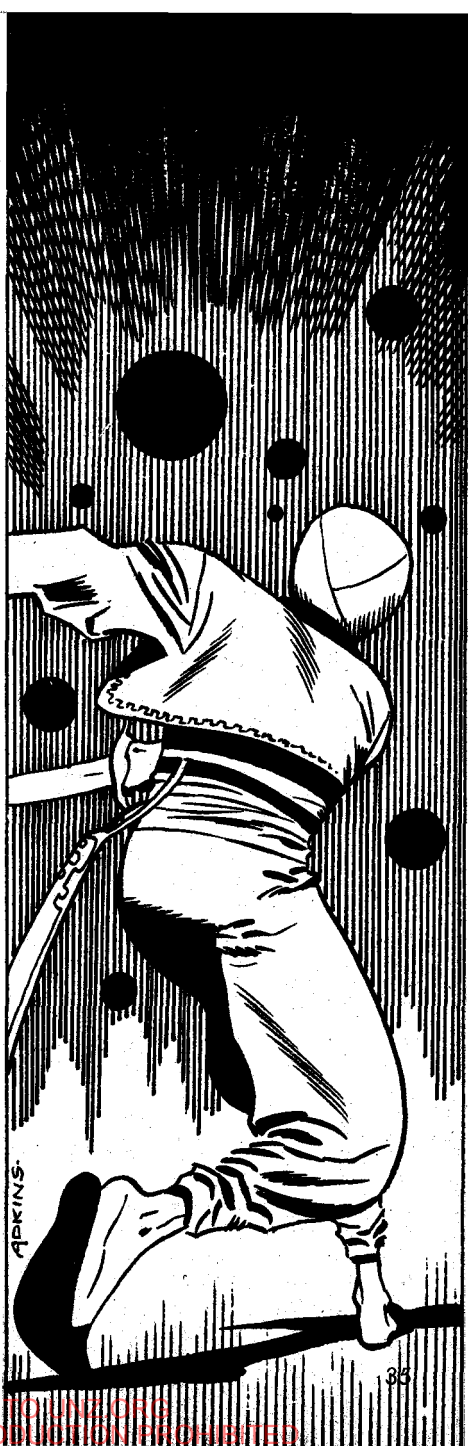
early nineteenth century clothing, feeling like refugees from a costume drama, and Sid showed us the sights in fine fashion.

On the side, I quickly discovered, he was carrying on a flourishing trade in gold doubloons and Spanish eight-real pieces. He didn't bother to conceal what he was doing from me, but he didn't talk about it, either, and I never really figured out all the intricate details. It had something to do—maybe—with taking advantage of variable exchange rates. All I know is that he swapped United States silver dollars for British gold guineas, used the guineas to buy French silver currency at a big discount, and met with Caribbean buccaneers by night on the banks of the Mississippi to trade the French coins for Spanish gold and silver. What he did with his doubloons and eight-real pieces I never knew. Nor could I see where the profit in the deal was coming from. My best theory was that he simply was trying to switch as many currencies around as possible, in order to build up a stock of coins for sale to collectors down the line; but somehow that seemed too simpleminded an operation for someone of his style. He didn't offer explanations and I was too shy to ask.

He was also a busy sexman. That isn't unusual for a Courier. ("The lady tourists are fair game," Sam said. "They fall all over themselves to submit to us. It's like the white-hunter thing in Africa.") But Sid Buonocore didn't just confine himself to plugging romance-hungry tourists, I discovered.

Late one night in our 1803 trip I was bothered with some procedural point and went to the Courier's bed-

UP THE LINE



room to ask him about it. I knocked and he said, "Come in," so I went in, but he wasn't alone. A tawny maiden with long black hair was sprawled on the bed. "Excuse me," I said. "I didn't mean to intrude." Sid Buonocore laughed. "Crap," he said. "We're finished for now. You aren't interrupting things. This is Maria."

"Hello, Maria," I said tentatively.

She giggled drunkenly. Sid spoke to her in the Creole patois and she giggled again. Rising from the bed, she performed an elegant nude curtsy before me and murmured, "*Bon soir, m'sieu.*" Then she fell on her face with a gentle swooning fall.

"She's lovely, isn't she?" Sid asked proudly. "Half Indian, half Spanish, half French. Have some rum."

I took a gulp from the flask he proffered. "That's too many halves," I said.

"Maria doesn't do anything in a petty way."

"So I see."

"I met her on my last trip through here. I'm timing things very carefully so that I can have her for a little while each night, and still not deprive my other selves of her. I mean, I can't predict how often I'll be doing this goddam run, Jud, but I might as well set myself up nicely each time I go up the line."

"Should you be saying such things in front of—"

"Doesn't speak a word of English. Absolutely safe."

Maria stirred and moaned. Sid took the rum flask from me and let some splash down onto her chest. She giggled again, and sleepily began to rub it into her breasts like a magic growth ointment. She didn't need any ointment.

Sid said, "She's quite passionate." "I'm sure."

He said something to her and she lurched to her feet and came toward me. Fumes of rum and fumes of lust rose from her. Unsteadily she reached her hands toward me, but she lost her balance and slipped once again to the planked floor. She lay there chuckling.

"Want to try her?" Sid asked. "Let her sober up a little, and take her back to your room and have some fun."

I said something about the interesting diseases she might be carrying. Sometimes I break out all over with fastidiousness at funny moments.

Buonocore spat scornfully. "You've had your shots. What are you worrying about?"

"They immunized us against typhoid and diphtheria and yellow fever and all that," I said. "But syphilis?"

"She's clean. Believe me. Anyway, if you're nervous, you can take a thermobath the minute you go down the line." He shrugged. "If something like that scares you, maybe you better not be a Courier."

"I didn't—"

"You saw that I was willing to ball her, didn't you? Jud, do you think I'm an ordinary fool or a goddam fool? Would I go to bed with a syphilitic? And then offer her to you?"

"Well—"

"There's only one thing you do have to worry about," he said. "Have you had your pill?"

"My pill?"

"Your pill, stupid! Your monthly pill!"

"Oh. Yes. Yes, of course."

"That's vital, if you're going to go up the line. You don't want to go

around fertilizing other people's ancestors. The Time Patrol will really scrape you for a thing like that. You can get away with a little fraternization with up-the-line people—you can do some business with them, you can go to bed with them—but you damned well better not plant any babies in them. Got it?"

"Sure, Sid."

"Remember, just because I fool around a little, that doesn't mean I'm willing to risk changing the past in a big way. Like fouling up the genetic flow by making babies up the line. Go you and do likewise, kid. Don't forget your pills. Now take Maria and clear out."

I took Maria and cleared out.

She sobered up fast in my room. She couldn't speak a word of any language I understood. I couldn't speak a word of any language she understood. But we made out all right anyway.

Even though she was 250 years older than me, there was nothing wrong with any aspect of her performance. Some things don't change much.

XVII

After I qualified as a Time Courier, and just before I departed to go on the Byzantium run, Sam gave a farewell party for me. Just about everyone I had known in Under New Orleans was invited, and we all crammed into Sam's two rooms. The girls from the sniffer palace were there, and an unemployed oral poet named Shigemitsu who spoke only in iambic pentameter, and five or six Time Service people, and a peddler of floaters, and a wild green-haired girl who worked as a

splitter in a helix parlor, and others. Sam even invited Flora Chambers, but she had shipped out the day before to fill in on the Sack of Rome run.

Everyone was given a floater as he arrived. So things turned on fast. Instants after the buzz of the floater's snout against my arm I felt my consciousness expanding like a balloon, stretching until my body could no longer contain it, bursting the confines of my skin. With a *pop!* I broke free and floated. The others were going through the same experience. Liberated from our chains of flesh, we drifted around the ceiling in an ectoplasmic haze, enjoying the slinkiness of the sensation. I sent foggy tentacles off to curl around the floating forms of Betsy and Helen, and we enjoyed a tranquil triple conjugation of the psychedelic sort. Meanwhile music came seeping from a thousand outputs in the wall paint, and the ceiling screen was tuned to the abstraction channel to enhance the effects. It was a very sweet scene.

"We grieve that you must take your leave of us," said Shigemitsu tenderly. "Your absence here creates an aching void. Though all the world now opens to your knock—"

He went on like that for at least five minutes. The poetry got really erotic toward the end. I wish I could remember that part of it.

We floated higher and higher. Sam, hosting it to the full, saw to it that nobody wore off even for a minute. His huge black body gleamed with oil. One young couple from the Time Service had brought their own coffin along; it was a lovely job, silk-lined, with all the sanitary attachments. They climbed in and let us monitor them on the telemetry line. Afterward, the

rest of us tried it, in twos or threes, and there was a great deal of laughter over some of the couplings. My partner was the floater peddler, and right in the middle of things we turned on all over again.

The sniffer palace girls danced for us, and three of the Time Couriers—two men and a fragile-looking young woman in an ermine loincloth—put on an exhibition of biological acrobatics, very charming. They had learned the steps in Knossos, where they watched Minos' dancers perform, and had simply adapted the movements to modern tastes by grafting in the copulations at the right moments. During the performance Sam distributed input scramblers to everybody. We plugged them in and beautiful synesthesia took hold. For me this time touch became smell; I caressed Betsy's cool skin and the fragrance of April lilacs came to me; I squeezed a cube of ice and smelled the sea at high tide; I stroked the ribbed wall fabric and my lungs filled with the dizzying flavor of a pine forest on fire. Then we did the pivot and for me sound became texture; Helen made passion-sounds in my ear and they became furry moss; music roared from the speakers as a torrent of thick cream; Shigemitsu began to moan in blank verse and the stabbing rhythms of his voice reached me as pyramids of ice. We went on to do things with color, taste, and duration. Of all the kinds of sensory pleasures invented in the last hundred years, I think scrambling is by far my favorite.

Later Emily, the helix parlor girl, came over. She was starvation-slim, with painfully sharp cheekbones, a scraggly mop of tangled green hair, and the most beautiful piercing green eyes

I have ever seen. Though she was high on everything at once simultaneously, she seemed cool and self-possessed—an illusion, I quickly discovered. She was floating. "Listen carefully to what she says," Sam advised me. "She goes clairvoyant under the influence of floaters. I mean it: she's the real thing."

She toppled into my arms. I supported her uncertainly a moment while her mouth sought mine. Her teeth nipped lightly into my lips. Delicately we toppled to the carpet, which emitted little thrumming sounds when we landed. She said in a hollow, prophetic voice, "You will soon begin a long journey."

"Yes."

"You will go up the line."

"That's right."

"In—Byzantium."

"Byzantium, yes."

"That is no country for old men!" cried a voice from the far side of the room. "The young in one another's arms, birds in the trees—"

"Byzantium," murmured an exhausted dancer spreadeagled near my feet.

"The golden smithies of the Emperor!" Shigemitsu screamed. "Spirit after spirit! The smithies break the flood! Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit!"

"The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed," I said.

Emily, quivering, bit my ear and said, "You will find your heart's desire in Byzantium."

"Sam said the same thing to me."

"And lose it there. And you will suffer, and regret, and repent, and you will not be the same as you were before."

"That sounds serious," I said.

"Beware love in Byzantium!" the prophetess shrielled. "Beware! Beware!"

"—the jaws that bite, the claws that catch!" sang Shigemitsu.

I promised Emily that I would be careful.

But the light of prophecy was gone from her eyes. She sat up, blinked several times, smiled uncertainly, and said, "Who are you?"

"I'm the guest of honor. Jud Eliott."

"I don't know you. What do you do?"

"Time Courier. Will be. I'm leaving to start service tomorrow."

"I think I remember now. I'm Emily."

"Yes, I know. You're with a helix parlor?"

"Someone's been talking about me!"

"Not much. What do you do there?"

"I'm a splitter," she said. "I separate genes. You see, when somebody is carrying the gene for red hair, and wants to transmit that to his children, but the gene is linked to, let's say, the gene for hemophilia, I split off the unwanted gene and edit it out."

"It sounds like very difficult work," I ventured.

"Not if you know what you're doing. There's a six-month training course."

"I see."

"It's interesting work. It tells you a lot about human nature, seeing how people want their children to come out. You know, not everybody wants improvements edited in. We get some amazing requests. We turn them down, of course. But then people go to bootleg helixers. They'll do anything for

anybody. Don't you know about them?"

"Not really."

"They produce the far-out mutations for the avant-garde set. The children with gills and scales, the children with twenty fingers, the ones with zebra-striped skin. The bootleggers will notch any gene at all—for the right price. They're terribly expensive. But they're the wave of the future."

"They are?"

"Cosmetic mutations are on the way in," Emily declared. "Don't misunderstand—our parlor won't touch the things. But this is the last generation of uniformity the human race is going to have. Variety of genotype and phenotype—that's what's ahead!" Her eyes sparkled with sudden lunacy, and I realized that a slow-acting floater must have exploded in her veins in the last few minutes. Drawing close to me, she whispered, "What do you think of this idea? Let's make a baby right now, and I'll redesign it after hours at the parlor! We'll keep up with the trends!"

"I'm sorry," I said. "I've had my pill this month."

"Let's try anyway," she said.

XVIII

I reached Istanbul on a murky summer afternoon and caught an express pod across the Bosphorus to the Time Service headquarters, which were on the Asian side. The city hadn't changed much since my last visit a year before. That was no surprise. Istanbul hasn't really changed since Kemal Ataturk's time, and that was 150 years ago. The same gray buildings, the same archaic clutter of un-

labeled streets, the same overlay of grit and grime. And the same heavenly mosques floating above the dilapidation.

I admire the mosques tremendously. They show that the Turks were good for *something*. But to me, Istanbul is a black joke of a city that someone has painted over the wounded stump of my beloved Constantinople. The little pieces of the Byzantine city that remain hold more magic for me than Sultan Ahmed's mosque, the Suleimaniye, and the mosque of Beyazit, all taken together.

The thought that I would soon be seeing Constantinople as a living city, with all the Turkish excrescences swept away, almost made me stain my pants with glee.

The Time Service had set up shop in a squat, formidable building of the late twentieth century, far up the Bosphorus, practically facing the Turkish fortress of Rumeli Hisari, from which the Conqueror strangled Byzantium in 1453. I was expected; even so, I had to spend fifteen minutes milling in an anteroom, surrounded by angry tourists complaining about some foulup in scheduling. One red-faced man kept shouting, "Where's the computer input? I want all this on record in the computer!" And a tired, angelic-looking secretary kept telling him wearily that everything he was saying *was* going on record, down to the ultimate bleat. Two swaggering giants in Time Patrol uniforms cut coolly through the melee, their faces grimly set, their minds no doubt riveted to duty. I could almost hear them thinking, "Aha! Aha!" A thin woman with a wedge-shaped face rushed up to them, waved papers at their deep-cleft chins,

and yelled, "Seven months ago I confirmed these reservations, yet! Right after Christmas it was! And now they tell me—" The Time Patrolmen kept walking. A robot vendor entered the waiting room and started to sell lottery tickets. Behind it came a haggard, unshaven Turk in a rumpled black jacket, peddling honeycakes from a greasy tray.

I admired the quality of the confusion. It showed genius.

Still, I wasn't unhappy to be rescued. A Levantine type who might have been a cousin of my fondly remembered instructor Najeeb Dajani appeared, introduced himself to me as Spiros Protopopolos, and led me hastily through a sphincter-door I had not noticed. "You should have come through the side way," he said. "I apologize for this delay. We didn't realize you were here."

He was about thirty, plump, sleek, with sunglasses and a great many white teeth. As we shot upshaft to the Couriers' lounge he said, "You have never worked as a Courier before, yes?"

"Yes," I said. "Never. My first time."

"You will love it! The Byzantium run especially. Byzantium, it is so—how shall I express it?" He pressed his pudgy palms rapturously together. "Surely you must feel some of it. But only a Greek like myself can respond fully. Byzantium! Ah, Byzantium!"

"I'm Greek also," I said.

He halted the shaft and raised his glasses. "You are not Judson Daniel Elliott III?"

"I am."

"This is Greek?"

"My mother's name was originally

Passalidis. She was born in Athens. My maternal grandfather was mayor of Sparta. On his mother's side he was descended from the Markezinis family."

"You are my brother!" cried Spiros Protopopolos.

It turned out that six of the nine other Time Couriers assigned to the Byzantium run were Greeks by nationality or descent; there were two Germans, Herschel and Melamed, and the tenth man was a slick, dark-haired Spaniard named Capistrano who later on, when deep in his cups, confided to me that his great-grandmother had been a Turk. He may have invented that so I'd despise him; Capistrano had a distinct streak of masochism.

Five of my nine colleagues were currently up the line and four were here in now-time Istanbul, thanks to the scheduling mishap that was causing so much dismay in the anteroom. Protopopolos made the introductions: Malamed, Capistrano, Pappas, meet Elliott. Melamed was fair-haired and hid behind a dense sandy beard; Pappas had hollow cheeks, sad eyes, and a drooping mustache. They were both about forty. Capistrano looked a little younger.

An illuminated board monitored the doorings of the other members of the team: Herschel, Kolettis, Plastiras, Metaxas, and Gompers. "Gompers?" I said. Protopopolos replied, "His grandmother was pure Hellene." The five of them were scattered over ten centuries, according to the board, with Kolettis in 1651 B.P. and Metaxas in 606 B.P.—that is, in A.D. 408 and 1453—and the others in between. As I stared at the board Kolet-

tis moved down the line by more than a century. "They have gone to see the riots," Melamed said softly, and Capistrano nodded, sighing.

Pappas brewed strong coffee for me. Capistrano uncorked a bottle of Turkish brandy, which I found a little hard to ingest. He prodded me encouragingly, saying, "Drink, drink, it's the best you'll taste in the last fifteen centuries!" I remembered Sam's advice that I should learn how to drink, and forced the stuff down, longing for a weed, a floater, a fume, anything decent.

While I relaxed with my new comrades, a Time Patrolman came into the room. He didn't use the scanner to get entry permission, or even knock; he just barged in. "Can't you ever be polite?" Pappas growled.

"Up yours," said the Time Patrolman. He sank down into a web and unbuttoned his uniform shirt. He was a chunky Aryan-looking sort with a hairy chest; what looked like golden wire curled toward his clavicles. "New man?" he said, jerking his head at me.

"Jud Elliott," I said. "Courier."

"Dave Van Dam," he said. "Patrol." His huge hand enfolded mine. "Don't let me catch you screwing around up the line. Nothing personal, but I'm a tough bastard. It's so easy to hate us: we're incorruptible. Try me and see."

"This is the lounge for Couriers," said Capistrano thinly.

"You don't need to tell me that," said Van Dam. "Believe it or not, I can read."

"Are you now a Courier, then?"

"Do you mind if I relax a little with the opposition?" The Patrolman grinned, scratched his chest, and put

the brandy bottle to his lips. He drank copiously and belched resonantly. "Christ, what a killer of a day! You know where I was today?"

Nobody seemed to care.

He continued anyway, "I spent the whole day in 1962! Nineteen goddam sixty-two! Checking out every floor of the Istanbul Goddam Hilton for two alleged timecrimers running an alleged artifact siphon. What we heard was they were bringing gold coins and Roman glass down from 1400 B.P. and selling them to American tourists in the Hilton, then investing the proceeds on the stock market and hiding the stash in a Swiss bank for pickup in now-time. Christ! You know, you can make *billions* that way? You buy in a bear-market year and stick it away for a century and you end up owning the world. Well, maybe so, but we didn't see a thing in the whole goddam Hilton except plenty of legitimate free enterprise based in then-time. Crap on it!" He took another pull on the brandy bottle. "Let them run a recheck upstairs. Find their own goddam timecrimers."

"This is the lounge for Couriers," Capistrano said once more.

The Patrolman took no notice. When he finally left, five minutes later, I said, "Are they all like that?"

Protopopolos said, "This was one of the refined ones. Most of the others are boors."

XIX

They put me to bed with a hypno-sleep course in Byzantine Greek, and when I woke up I not only could order a meal, buy a tunic, or seduce a virgin in Byzantine argot, but I knew

some phrases that could make the mosaics of Haghia Sophia peel from the walls in shame. I hadn't known about those phrases when I was a graduate student at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Good stuff, hypnosleep.

I still wasn't ready to go out solo as a Courier. Protopopolos, who was serving as staff router this month, arranged to team me with Capistrano for my first time out. If everything went smoothly, I'd be put on my own in a few weeks.

The Byzantium run, which is one of the most popular that the Time Service offers, is pretty standard stuff. Every tour is taken to see the coronation of an emperor, a chariot race in the Hippodrome, the dedication of Haghia Sophia, the sack of the city by the Fourth Crusade, and the Turkish conquest. A tour like that stays up the line for seven days. The fourteen-day tour covers all that plus the arrival of the First Crusade in Constantinople, the riots of 532, an imperial wedding, and a couple of lesser events. The Courier has his options about which coronations, emperors, or chariot races to go to; the idea is to avoid contributing to the Cumulative Paradox by cluttering any one event with too many tourists. Just about every major period between Justinian and the Turks gets visited, although we're cautioned to avoid the years of bad earthquakes and absolutely prohibited, under penalty of obliteration by the Time Patrol, from entering the bubonic plague years of 745-47.

On my last night in now-time I was so excited I couldn't sleep. Partly I was keyed up over the fear of blundering somehow on my first assign-

ment as a Courier; for it's a big responsibility to be a Courier, even with a colleague along, and I was afraid of committing some terrible mistake. The thought of having to be rescued by the Time Patrol upset me. What a humiliation!

But mainly I was worried about Constantinople. Would it live up to my dream of it? Or *would it let me down*? All my life I had cherished an image of that golden, glittering city of the past; now, on the verge of going up the line to it, I trembled.

I got up and stumbled around the little room they had given me, feeling drawn and tense. I was off all drugs and wasn't allowed to smoke—Couriers have to taper off such things ahead of time, since it's obviously an illegal anachronism to light up a weed in a tenth-century street. Capistrano had given me the dregs of his brandy, but that was small consolation. He heard me walking into furniture, though, and came to see what the trouble was.

"Restless?" he asked.

"Very."

"I always am, before a jump. It never wears off."

He talked me into going out with him to soothe our nerves. We crossed to the European side and wandered at random through the silent streets of the new city, up from Dolmabahce Palace at the shore to the old Hilton, and down past Taksim to the Galata Bridge and into Istanbul proper. We walked tirelessly. We seemed to be the only ones awake in the city. Through the winding maze of a market we wound, emerging on one of those steep streets leading to Haghia Sophia, and we stood a while in front of the majestic old building. I imprinted its

features on my brain—the extraneous minarets, the late buttresses—and tried to make myself believe that in the morning I'd see it in its true form, serene mistress of the city, no longer compelled to share its grand plaza with the alien loveliness of the Blue Mosque across the way.

On and on we went, scrambling over the fragments of the Hippodrome, circling Topkapi, making our way to the sea and the old seawall. Dawn found us outside the Yedikule fortress, in the shadow of the crumbling Byzantine rampart. We were half asleep. A Turkish boy of about fifteen approached us politely and asked, first in French and then in English, if we were in the market for anything—old coins, his sister, hashish, Israeli currency, gold jewelry, his brother, a carpet. We thanked him and said we weren't. Undaunted, he summoned his sister, who may have been fourteen but looked four or five years older. "Virgin," he said. "You like her? Nice figure, eh? What are you, American, English, German? Here, you look, eh?" She unsnapped her blouse at a harsh command from him, and displayed attractive taut round breasts. Dangling on a string between them was a heavy Byzantine bronze coin, possible a *folks*. I peered close for a better look. The boy, breathing garlic at me, realized suddenly that it was the coin and not the breasts that I was studying, and made a smooth switch, saying, "You like old coins, eh? We find plenty under wall in a pot. You wait here, I show you, yes?" He ran off. The sister sullenly closed her blouse. Capistrano and I walked away. The girl followed us, calling out to us to stay, but by the time we had gone twenty meters

she lost interest. We were back at the Time Service building in an hour, by pod.

After breakfast we got into costume: long silk tunics, Roman sandals, light cloaks. Capistrano solemnly handed me my timer. By now I had been well trained in its use. I slipped it in place against my skin and felt a dazzling surge of power, knowing that now I was free to transport myself to any era, and was accountable to no one so long as I kept in mind the preservation of the sanctity of now-time. Capistrano winked at me.

"Up the line," he said.

"Up the line," I said.

We went downstairs to meet our eight tourists.

XX

The jumping-off place for the Byzantium run is almost always the same: the plaza in front of Haghia Sophia. The ten of us, feeling faintly foolish in our robes, were taken there by bus, arriving about ten that morning. More conventional tourists, merely there to see Istanbul, flocked back and forth between the great cathedral and nearby Sultan Ahmed. Capistrano and I made sure that everybody's timer was in place and that the rules of time travel had been thoroughly nagged into everyone's skull.

Our group included a pair of pretty young men from London, a couple of maidenly German schoolteachers, and two elderly American husband-and-wife outfits. Everybody had had the hypnocourse in Byzantine Greek, and for the next sixty days or so would be as fluent in that as in their native languages, but Capistrano and I had

to keep reminding the Americans and one of the German girls to speak it.

We jumped.

I felt the momentary disorientation that always comes when you go up the line. Then I got my bearings and discovered that I had departed from Istanbul and had reached Constantinople.

Constantinople did not let me down.

The grime was gone. The minarets were gone. The mosques were gone. The Turks were gone.

The air was blue and sweet and clear. We stood in the great plaza, the Augusteum, in front of Haghia Sophia. To my right, where there should have been bleak gray office buildings, I saw open fields. Ahead of me, where the blue fantasy of Sultan Ahmed's mosque should have been, I saw a rambling conglomeration of low marble palaces. To the side rose the flank of the Hippodrome. Figures in colorful robes, looking like fugitives from Byzantine mosaics, sauntered through the spacious square.

I swung around for my first view of Haghia Sophia without her minarets.

Haghia Sophia was not there.

On the familiar site I saw the charred and tumbled ruins of an unfamiliar rectangular basilica. The stone walls stood, but precariously; the roof was gone. Three soldiers drowed in the shadow of its facade. I was lost.

Capistrano said droningly, "We have journeyed sixteen centuries up the line. The year is 408; we have come to behold the baptismal procession of Emperor Arcadius' son, who will one day rule as Theodosius II. To our rear, on the site of the well-known cathedral of Haghia Sophia, we may see the ruins of the original basilica,

built during the reign of the Emperor Constantius, son of Constantine the Great, and opened for prayer on the 15th of December, 360. This building was burned on the 20th of June, 404, during a rebellion, and as you can see reconstruction has not yet begun. The church will be rebuilt about thirty years down the line by Emperor Theodosius II, and you will see it on our next stop. Come this way."

As though in a dream I followed, as much a tourist as our eight charges. Capistrano did all the work. He lectured us in a perfunctory but comprehensive way about the marble buildings ahead, which was the beginning of the Great Palace. I couldn't reconcile what I saw with the ground plans I had memorized at Harvard; but of course the Constantinople I had studied was the later, greater, post-Justinian city, and now I stood in the city at its dawn. We turned inland, away from the palace district, into a residential district where the houses of the rich, blank-fronted and courtyarded, mixed helter-skelter with the rush-roofed hovels of the poor. And then we emerged on the Mese, the grand processional street, lined by arched shops, and on this day, in honor of the baptism of the prince, decked with silk hangings adorned with gold.

All the citizens of Byzantium were here, packing the street, elbow to elbow in anticipation of the grand parade. Foodshops were busy; we smelled grilled ham and baked lamb, and eyed stalls laden with cheeses, nuts, unfamiliar fruits. One of the German girls said she was hungry, and Capistrano laughed and bought spitted lamb for us all, paying for it with bright copper coins worth a fortune to a

numismatist. A one-eyed man sold us wine out of a huge cool amphora, letting us drink right from the ladle. Once it became obvious to the other peddlers in the vicinity that we were susceptible customers, they crowded around by the dozens, offering us souvenirs, candied sweets, elderly-looking hard-boiled eggs, pans of salted nuts, trays of miscellaneous animal organs, eyeballs and other balls. This was the real thing, the genuinely archaic past; that array of vended oddities and the reek of sweat and garlic coming from the mob of vendors told us that we were a long way from 2059.

"Foreigners?" asked a bearded man who was selling little clay oil lamps. "Where from? Cyprus? Egypt?"

"Spain," said Capistrano.

The oil-lamp man eyed us in awe, as though we had claimed to come from Mars. "Spain," he repeated. "Spain! Wonderful! To travel so far, to see our city—" He gave our whole group a detailed survey, taking a quick inventory and fastening on blonde and breasty Clotilde, the more voluptuous of our two German schoolteachers. "Your slavegirl is a Saxon?" he asked me, feeling the merchandise through Clotilde's loose robes. "Ah, very nice! You are a man of taste!" Clotilde gasped and pried his fingers from her thigh. Coldly Capistrano seized the man, pushing him up against the wall of a shop so roughly that a dozen of his clay lamps tumbled to the pavement and shattered. The vendor winked, but Capistrano said something chilly under his breath and gave the man a terrible glare. "I meant no harm," the vendor protested. "I thought she was a slave!" He muttered a curt apology and limped away.

Clotilde was trembling—whether from outrage or excitement, it was hard to tell. Her companion, Lise, looked a little envious.

Capistrano spat. "That could have been troublesome. We must always be on our guard; innocent pinching can turn quickly to complications and catastrophe."

The peddlers edged away from us. We found places near the front of the mob, facing the street. It seemed to me that many of the faces in the crowd were un-Byzantine, and I wondered if they were the faces of time-travelers. A time is coming, I thought, when we from down the line will throng the past to the choking point. We will fill all our yesterdays with ourselves and crowd out our own ancestors.

"Here they come!" a thousand voices shouted.

Trumpets blared in several different keys. In the distance there appeared a procession of nobles, clean-cut and close-cropped in the Roman fashion, for this was still as much a Roman city as it was a Greek one. Everyone wore white silk—imported at great cost by caravan from China, Capistrano murmured; the Byzantines had not yet stolen the secret of silk manufacture—and the late afternoon sun, striking the splendid robes at a steep angle, gave the procession such a glow of beauty that even Capistrano, who had seen it all before, was moved. Slowly, slowly, the high dignitaries advanced.

"They look like snowflakes," whispered a man behind me. "Dancing snowflakes!"

It took nearly an hour for these high ones to pass us. Twilight came. Following the priests and dukes of

Byzantium were the imperial troops, carrying lighted candles that flickered in the deepening dusk like an infinity of stars. Then came more priests, bearing medallions and icons; and then a prince of the royal blood, carrying the gurgling, plump infant who would be the mighty Emperor Theodosius II; and then the reigning emperor himself, Arcadius, clad in imperial purple. The Emperor of Byzantium! I repeated that to myself a thousand times. I, Judson Daniel Elliott III, stood bareheaded under the Byzantine sky, here in 408 A.D., while the Emperor of Byzantium, robes aswish, walked past me! Even though the monarch was merely the trifling Arcadius, the insignificant interpolation between the two Theodosii, I trembled. I swayed. The pavement heaved and bucked beneath me. "Are you ill?" whispered Clotilde anxiously. I sucked breath and begged the universe to stand still. I was overwhelmed, and by Arcadius. What if this had been Justinian? Constantine? Alexius?

You know how it is. Eventually I got to see even those great ones. But by then I had seen too much up the line, and though I was impressed, I wasn't engulfed with awe. Of Justinian my clearest memory is that he sneezed; but when I think of Arcadius, I hear trumpets and see stars whirling in the sky.

XXI

We stayed that night in an inn overlooking the Golden Horn; on the other side of the water, where Hiltons and countinghouses one day would rise, was only an impenetrable darkness. The inn was a substantial wooden

building with a dining hall on the ground floor and huge, rough, dormitory-style rooms above. Somehow I expected to be asked to sleep on the floor in a strew of rushes, but no, there were beds of a recognizable sort, and mattresses stuffed with rags. Sanitary facilities were outside, behind the building. There were no baths; we were expected to use the public bathhouses if we craved cleanliness. The ten of us shared one room, but fortunately none of us minded that.

That night we did little sleeping. There was too much noise, for one thing, since the celebration of the imperial baptism went on raucously throughout the city until almost dawn. But who could sleep, anyway, knowing that the world of the early fifth century lay just beyond the door?

One night before and sixteen centuries up the line, Capistrano had kindly seen me through a siege of sleeplessness. Now he did it again. I rose and stood by the little slit of a window, peering at the bonfires in the city, and when he noticed me he came over and said, "Understand. Sleeping is hard at first."

"Yes."

"Shall I get a woman for you?"

"No."

"We'll take a walk, then?"

"Can we leave them?" I asked, looking at our eight tourists.

"We won't go far. We'll stay just outside, within reach if some trouble starts."

The air was heavy and mild. Snatches of obscene song floated up from the tavern district. We walked toward it; the taverns were still open and full of drunken soldiers. Capistrano bought two flasks of oily Greek wine and we

returned to the inn, to sit quietly downstairs and drink the darkness away.

He did most of the talking. Like many Time Couriers, his life had been a complex, jagged one full of detours, and he let his autobiography dribble out between gulps of wine. Noble Spanish ancestors, he said (he didn't tell me about the Turkish great-grandmother until months later, when he was far more thoroughly drunk); early marriage to a virgin of high family; education at the best universities of Europe. Then inexplicable decline, loss of ambition, loss of fortune, loss of wife. "My life," said Capistrano, "broke in half when I was 27 years of age. I required total reintegration of personality. As you see, the effort was not a true success." He spoke of a series of temporary marriages, adventures in criminality, experiments with hallucinatory drugs that made weeds and floaters look innocent. When he enrolled as a Time Courier, it was only as an alternative to suicide. "I keyed to an output and asked for a bit at random," he said. "Positive, and I become a Courier. Negative, and I drink poison. The bit came up positive. Here I am." He drained his wine.

To me that night he seemed a wonderful mixture of the desperate, tragic romantic and the self-dramatizing charlatan. Of course, I was drunk myself, and very young. But I told him how much I admired his quest for identity, and secretly wished that I could learn the knack of seeming so appealingly destroyed, so interestingly lost.

"Come," he said, when the last of the wine was gone. "To dispose of the corpses."

We hurled our flasks into the Golden

Horn. Streaks of dawn were emerging. As we walked slowly back to the inn, Capistrano said, "I have made a little hobby of tracing my ancestors, do you know? It is my own private research. Here—look at these names." He produced a small, thick notebook. "In each era I visit," he said, "I seek out my ancestors and list them here. Already I know several hundred of them, going back to the fourteenth century. Do you realize how immense the number of one's ancestors is? We have two parents, and each of them has two parents, and each of them two parents—go back only four generations and you have already thirty ancestors!"

"An interesting hobby," I said.

Capistrano's eyes blazed. "More than a hobby! More than a hobby! A matter of death and life! Look, my friend, whenever I grow more tired than usual of existence, all I must do is find one of these people, *one*, and destroy him! Take his life when he is still a child, perhaps. Then return to now-time. And in that moment, swiftly, without pain, my own tiresome life ceases ever to have been!"

"But the Time Patrol—"

"Helpless," said Capistrano. "What can the Patrol do? If my crime is discovered, I am seized and erased from history for timecrime, right? If my crime is not discovered, and why should it be, then I have erased myself. Either way I am gone. Is this not the most charming way of suicide?"

"In eliminating your own ancestor," I said, "you might be changing now-time to a greater degree. You'd also eliminate your own brothers and sisters—uncles—grandparents and all of *their* brothers and sisters—all by re-

moving one prop from the past!"

He nodded solemnly. "I am aware of this. And so I compile these genealogies, you see, in order to determine how best to effect my own erasure. I am not Samson; I have no wish to bring the temple crashing down with myself. I will look for the strategic person to eliminate, one who is himself sinful, incidentally, for I will not slay the truly innocent, and I will remove that person and thus myself, and perhaps the changes in now-time will not be terribly great. If they are, the Patrol will discover and undo them, and still give me the exit I crave."

I wondered if he was crazy or just drunk. A little of both, I decided.

I felt like telling him that if he really wanted to kill himself that badly, it would be a whole lot less trouble for everybody else if he'd just go jump in the Bosphorus.

I felt a twinge of terror at the thought that the whole Time Service might be permeated by Capistranos, all shopping around for the most interestingly self-destructive way of changing the past.

"I'm cold," I said. "Let's go upstairs."

Upstairs, the early light revealed eight sleepers, huddled two by two. I lay down on my lonely bed and slipped quickly into sleep. Soon Capistrano woke me, and we woke the others. I felt ten thousand years old.

We had a breakfast of cold lamb and went out for a quick daylight walking tour of the city. Most of the interesting things had not yet been built, or else were still in early forms; we didn't stay long. At noon we went to the Augusteum to shunt. "Our

next stop," Capistrano announced, "will be 532 A.D., where we will see the city of Justinian's time and witness the riots which destroyed it, making possible the construction of the finer and more grand city that won such eternal fame." We backed into the shadows of the ruined original Hagia Sophia, so that no passersby would be startled by the sight of ten people vanishing. I set all the timers. Capistrano produced his pitchpipe and gave the master signal. We shunted.

XXII

Two weeks later we all returned down the line to 259. I was dizzied, intoxicated, my soul full of Byzantium.

I had seen the highlights of a thousand years of greatness. The city of my dreams had come to life for me. The meat and wine of Byzantium had passed through my bowels.

From a Courier's professional point of view, the trip had been a good one, that is, uneventful. Our tourists had not entangled themselves in trouble, nor had any paradoxes been created, as far as we could tell. There had been a little friction only one night, when Capistrano, very drunk, tried to seduce Clotilde; he wasn't subtle about it, letting seduction shade into rape when she resisted, but I managed to separate them before her nails got into his eyes. In the morning he wouldn't believe it. "The blonde lesbian?" he asked. "I would stoop so low? You must dream it!" And then he insisted on going eight hours up the line to see if it had really happened. I had visions of a sober Capistrano taking his earlier sozzled self to task, and it scared me. I had to argue him out of

it in a blunt and direct way, reminding him of the Time Patrol's regulation prohibiting anyone from engaging in a conversation with himself of a different now-time basis, and threatening to report him if he tried it. Capistrano looked wounded, but he let the matter drop. And when we came down the line and he filed a report of his own, upon request, concerning my behavior as a Courier, he gave me the highest rating. Protopopolos told me that afterward.

"Your next trip," said Protopopolos, "will be as assistant to Metaxas, on the one-week tour."

"When do I leave?"

"In two weeks," he said. "Your layoff comes first, remember? And after you return from the trip with Metaxas, you begin soloing. Where will you spend your layoff?"

"I think I'll go down to Crete or Mykonos," I said, "and get a little rest on the beach."

The Time Service insists that Couriers take two-week vacations between trips. The Time Service doesn't believe in pushing its Couriers too hard. During layoffs, Couriers are completely at liberty. They can spend the whole time relaxing in now-time, as I proposed to do, or they can sign up with a time tour, or they can simply go hopping by themselves to any era that may interest them.

There's no charge for timer use when a Courier makes jumps up the line in his layoff periods. The Time Service wants to encourage its employees to feel at home in all periods of the past, and what better way than to allow unlimited free shunting?

Protopopolos looked a little disappointed when I said I'd spend my vacation sunning myself in the islands.

"Don't you want to do some jumping?" he asked.

The idea of making time-jumps on my own at this stage of my career scared me, frankly. But I couldn't tell Protopopolos that. Also I considered the point that in another month he'd be handing me the responsibility for the lives of an entire tour group. Maybe this conversation was part of the test of my qualifications. Were they trying to see if I had the guts to go jumping on my own?

Protopopolos seemed to be fishing for an answer.

I said, "On second thought, why waste a chance to do some jumping? I'll have a peek at post-Byzantine Istanbul."

"With a tour group?"

"On my own," I said.

XXIII

So I went jumping, smack into the Paradox of Discontinuity.

My first stop was the wardrobe department. I needed costumes suited for Istanbul of the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. Instead of giving me a whole sequence of clothes to fit the changing fashions, they decked me out in an all-purpose Moslem rig, simple white robes of no particular era, nondescript sandals, long hair, and a straggly youthful beard. By way of pocket-money they supplied me with a nice assortment of gold and silver pieces of the right eras, a little of everything that might have been circulating in medieval Turkey, including some bezants of Greek-ruled times, miscellaneous coinage of the sultans, and a good deal of Venetian gold. All this was installed in a currency belt that I wore

just above my timer, and the coins were segregated from left to right according to centuries, so that I wouldn't get into trouble by offering an eighteenth-century dinar in a sixteenth-century marketplace. There was no charge for the money; the Time Service runs a continuous siphon of its own, circulating coinage between now-time and then-time for the benefit of its personnel, and a Courier going on holiday can sign out any reasonable amount to cover his expenses. To the Service it's only play money, anyway, infinitely replenishable at will. I like the system.

I took hypnosleep courses in Turkish and Arabic before I left. The Special Requests department fabricated a quick cover identity for me that would work well in any era of my intended visit: if questioned, I was supposed to identify myself as a Portuguese national who had been kidnapped on the high seas by Algerian pirates when ten years old, and raised as a Moslem in Algiers. That would account for flaws in my accent and for my vagueness about my background; if I had the misfortune to be interrogated by a real Portuguese, which wasn't likely, I could simply say that I couldn't remember much about my life in Lisbon and had forgotten the names of my forebears; so long as I kept my mouth shut, prayed toward Mecca five times a day, and watched my step, I wasn't likely to get into trouble. (Of course, if I landed in a really serious mess I could escape by using my timer, but in the Time Service that's considered a coward's route, and also undesirable because of the implications of witchcraft that you leave behind when you vanish.)

All these preparations took a day

and a half. Then they told me I was ready to jump. I set my timer for 500 B.P., picking the era at random, and jumped.

I arrived on August 14, 1559, at nine-thirty in the evening. The reigning sultan was the great Suleiman I, nearing the close of his epoch. Turkish armies threatened the peace of Europe; Istanbul was bursting with the wealth of conquest. I couldn't respond to this city as I had to the sparkling Constantinople of Justinian or Alexius, but that was a personal matter having to do with ancestry, chemistry, and historical affinity. Taken on its own merits, Suleiman's Istanbul was a city among cities.

I spent half the day roaming it. For an hour I watched a lovely mosque under construction, hoping it was the Suleimaniye, but later in the day I found the Suleimaniye, brand new and glistening in noon light. I made a special pilgrimage, covertly consulting a map I had smuggled with me, to find the mosque of Mehmet the Conqueror, which an earthquake would bring down in 1766. It was worth the walk. Toward mid-afternoon, after an inspection of the mosqueified Haghia Sophia and the sad ruins of the Great Palace of Byzantium across the plaza (Sultan Ahmed's mosque would be rising there fifty years down the line), I made my way to the Covered Bazaar, thinking to buy a few small trinkets as souvenirs, and when I was no more than ten paces past the entrance I caught sight of my beloved guru Sam.

Consider the odds against that: with thousands of years in which to roam, the two of us coming on holiday to the same year and the same day and the same city, and meeting under the

same roof!

He was clad in Moorish costume, straight out of *Othello*. There was no mistaking him; he was by far the tallest man in sight, and his coal-black skin glistened brilliantly against his white robes. I rushed up to him.

"Sam!" I cried. "Sam, you old black bastard, what luck to meet you here."

He whirled in surprise, frowned at me, looked puzzled. "I know you not," he said coldly.

"Don't let the beard fool you. It's me, Sam. Jud Elliott."

He glared. He growled. A crowd began to gather. I wondered if I had been wrong. Maybe this wasn't Sam, but Sam's multi-great-grandfather, made to look like his twin by a genetic fluke. No, I told myself, this is the authentic Sambo.

But then why is he pulling out that scimitar?

We had been talking in Turkish. I switched to English and said, "Listen, Sam, I don't know what's going on, but I'm willing to ride along with your act. Suppose we meet in half an hour outside Haghia Sophia, and we can—"

"Infidel dog!" he roared. "Beggar's spawn! Away from me! Away, cutpurse!"

He swished the scimitar menacingly above my head and continued to rave in Turkish. Suddenly in a lower voice he muttered, "I don't know who the hell you are, pal, but if you don't clear out of here fast I'm going to have to slice you in half." That much was in English. In Turkish again he cried, "Molester of infants! Drinker of toad's milk! Devourer of camel-dung!"

This was no act. He genuinely didn't

recognize me, and he genuinely didn't want anything to do with me. Baffled, I backed away from him, hustled down one of the subsidiary corridors of the bazaar, stepped out into the open, and hastily shunted myself ten years down the line. A couple of people saw me go, but crap on them; to a Turk of 1559 the world must have been full of efreets and jinni, and I was just one more phantom.

I didn't stay in 1569 more than five minutes. Sam's wild reaction to my greeting had me so mystified that I couldn't relax and see the sights. I had to have an explanation. So I hurried on down the line to 2059, materializing a block from the Covered Bazaar and nearly getting smeared by a taxi. A few latter-day Turks grinned and pointed at my medieval Turkish robes. The unsophisticated apes hadn't yet learned to take returning time-travelers for granted, I guess.

I went quickly to the nearest public communications booth, thumbed the plate, and put through a call to Sam.

"He is not at his home number," the master information output told me. "Should we trace him?"

"Yes, please," I said automatically.

A moment later I slapped myself for stupidity. Of course he won't be home, you idiot! He's up the line in 1559!

But the master communications network had already begun tracing him. Instead of doing the sensible thing and hanging up, I stood there like a moron, waiting for the inevitable news that the master communication network couldn't find him anywhere.

About three minutes went by. Then the bland voice said, "We have traced your party to Nairobi and he is stand-

ing by for your call. Please notify if you wish to proceed."

"Go ahead," I said, and Sam's ebony features blossomed on the screen.

"Is there trouble, child?" he asked.

"What are you doing in Nairobi?" I screamed.

"A little holiday among my own people. Should I not be here?"

"Look," I said, "I'm on my layoff between Courier jobs, and I've just been up the line to 1559 Istanbul, and I met you there."

"So?"

"How can you be there if you're in Nairobi?"

"The same way that there can be twenty-two specimens of your Arab instructor back there watching the Romans nail up Jesus," Sam said. "Sheet, man, when will you learn to think four-dimensionally?"

"So that's a different you up the line in 1559?"

"It better be, buster! He's there and I'm here!" Sam laughed. "A little thing like that shouldn't upset you, man. You're a Courier now, remember?"

"Wait. Wait. Here's what happened. I walked into the Covered Bazaar, see, and there you were in Moorish robes, and I let out this big whoop and ran up to you to say hello. And you didn't know me, Sam! You started waving your scimitar, and cursing me out, and you told me in English to get the hell away from you, and—"

"Well, hey, man, you know it's against regulations to talk to other time-travelers when you're up the line. Unless you set out from the same now-time as the other man, you're supposed to ignore him even if you see through his cover. Fraternization is prohibited

because—”

“Yeah, sure, but it was *me*, Sam. I didn’t think you’d pull rules on *me*. You didn’t even know me, Sam!”

“That’s obvious. But why are you so upset, kid?”

“It was like you had amnesia. It scared me, Sam.”

“But I *couldn’t* have known you.”

“What are you talking about?”

Sam began to laugh. “The Paradox of Discontinuity! Don’t tell me they never taught you that one!”

“They said something about it, but I never was paying much attention to a lot of that stuff, Sam.”

“Well, pay attention now. You know what year it was I took that Istanbul trip?”

“No.”

“It was 2056, ’55, someplace back there. And I didn’t meet you until three or four years later—this spring, it was. So the Sam you found in 1559 never saw you before. Discontinuity, see? You were working from a now-time basis of 2059, and I was working from a basis of maybe ’55, and so you were a stranger to me, but I wasn’t a stranger to you. That’s one reason why Couriers aren’t supposed to talk to friends they run into by accident up the line.”

I began to see.

“I begin to see,” I said.

“To me,” said Sam, “you were some dumb fresh kid trying to make trouble, maybe even a Time Patrol fink. I didn’t know you and I didn’t want anything to do with you. Now that I think about it a little, I remember something like that happening when I was there. Somebody from down the line bothering me in the bazaar. Funny that I never connected

him with you, though!”

“I had a fake beard on, up the line.”

“That must have been it. Well, listen, are you all straightened out now?”

“The Paradox of Discontinuity, Sam. Sure.”

“You’ll remember to keep clear of old friends when you’re up the line?”

“You bet. Christ, Sam, you really terrified me with that scimitar!”

“Otherwise, how’s it going?”

“Great,” I said. “It’s really great.”

“Watch those paradoxes, kid,” Sam dais, and blew me a kiss.

Much relieved, I stepped out of the booth and went up the line to 1550 to watch them build the mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent.

XXIV

Themistoklis Metaxas was the chief Courier for my second time-tour of Byzantium. From the moment I met him I sensed that this man was going to play a major role in my destiny, and I was right.

Metaxas was bantam-sized, maybe 1.5 meters tall. His skull was triangular, flat on top and pointed at the chin. His hair, thick and curly, was going gray. I guess he was about fifty years old. He had small glossy dark eyes, heavy brows, and a big sharp slab of a nose. He kept his lips curled inward so that he didn’t seem to have lips at all. There was no fat on him anywhere. He was unusually strong. His voice was low and compelling.

Metaxas had charisma. Or should I call it chutzpah?

A little of both, I think. For him the whole universe revolved around

Themistoklis Metaxas; suns were born only that they might shed starlight on Themistoklis Metaxas; the Benchley Effect had been invented solely to enable Themistoklis Metaxas to walk through the ages. If he ever died, the cosmos would crumble.

He had been one of the first Time Couriers ever hired, more than fifteen years ago. If he had cared to have the job, he could have been the head of the entire Courier Service by now, with a platoon of wanton secretaries and no need to battle fleas in old Byzantium. By choice, though, Metaxas remained a Courier on active duty, doing nothing but the Byzantium run. He practically regarded himself as a Byzantine citizen, and even spent his layoffs there, in a villa he had acquired in the suburbs of the early twelfth century.

He was engaged on the side in a variety of small and large illegalities; they might be interrupted if he retired as a Courier, so he didn't retire. The Time Patrol was terrified of him and let him have his own way in everything. Of course, Metaxas had more sense than to meddle with the past in any way that might cause serious changes in now-time, but aside from that his plundering up the line were totally uninhibited.

When I met him for the first time he said to me, "You haven't lived until you've laid one of your own ancestors."

XXV

It was a big group: twelve tourists, Metaxas, and me. They always loaded a few extras into his tours because he was such an unusually capable Courier

and in such great demand. I tagged along as an assistant, soaking up experience against my first solo trip, which would be coming next time.

Our dozen included three young and pretty single girls, Princeton co-eds making the Byzantium trip on gifts from their parents, who wanted them to learn something; two of the customary well-to-do middle-aged couples, one from Indianapolis and one from Milan; two youngish interior decorators, male and queer, from Beirut; a recently divorced response manipulator from New York, around 45 and hungry for women; a puffy-faced little high-school teacher from Milwaukee, trying to improve his mind, and his wife; in short, the customary sampling.

Metaxas was a tremendous courier. He knew everybody and everything, and maneuvered us into superb positions for the big events.

"We are now," he said, "in January, 532. The Emperor Justinian rules. His ambition is to conquer the world and govern it from Constantinople, but most of his great achievements lie ahead. The city, as you see, still looks much as it did in the last century. In front of you is the Great Palace; to the rear is the rebuilt Haghia Sophia of Theodosius II, following the old basilica plan, not yet reconstructed with the familiar domes. The city is tense; there will soon be civil disorder. Come this way."

Shivering in the cold, we followed Metaxas through the city, down byways and avenues I had not traveled when I came this way earlier with Capistrano. Never once on this trip did I catch sight of my other self or Capistrano or any of that group; one of Metaxas' legendary skills was his

ability to find new approaches to the standard scenes.

Of course, he had to. At this moment there were fifty or a hundred Metaxases leading tours through Justinian's city. As a matter of professional pride he wouldn't want to intersect any of those other selves.

"There are two factions in Constantinople now," said Metaxas. "The Blues and the Greens, they are called. They consist of perhaps a thousand men on each side, all troublemakers, and far more influential than their numbers indicate. The factions are something less than political parties, something more than mere supporters of sports teams, but they have characteristics of both. The Blues are more aristocratic; the Greens have links to the lower classes and the commercial strata. Each faction backs a team in the Hippodrome games, and each backs a certain course of governmental policies. Justinian has long been sympathetic to the Blues, and the Greens mistrust him. But as emperor he has tried to appear neutral. He would actually like to suppress both factions as threats to his power. Each night now the factions run wild in the streets. Look: those are Blues."

Metaxas nodded at a cluster of insolent-looking bravos across the way: eight or nine idling men with long tumbles of thick hair to their shoulders, and festoons of beards and mustaches. They had cut back only the hair on the fronts of their heads. Their tunics were drawn in tight at the wrists, but flared out enormously from there to the shoulders; they wore gaudy capes and breeches and carried short two-edged swords. They looked brutal and dangerous.

"Wait here," said Metaxas, and went over to them.

The Blues greeted him like an old friend. They clapped him on the back, laughed, shouted in glee. I couldn't hear the conversation, but I saw Metaxas grasping hands, talking quickly, articulately, confidently. One of the Blues offered him a flask of wine and he took a deep drink; then, hugging the man in mock tipsiness, Metaxas cunningly whisked the Blue's sword from its sheath and pretended to run him through. The rowdies capered and applauded. Now Metaxas pointed at us; there were nods of agreement, oglings of the girls, winks, gestures. Finally we were summoned across the street.

"Our friends invite us to the Hippodrome as their guests," said Metaxas. "The races begin next week. Tonight we are permitted to join them in their revels."

I could hardly believe it. When I'd been here with Capistrano, we skulked about, keeping out of sight, for this was a time of rape and murder by night, and all laws ceased to function after dark. How did Metaxas dare to bring us so close to the criminals?

He dared. And that night we roamed Constantinople, watching the Blues rob, ravish, and kill. For other citizens death lay just around any corner; we were immune, privileged witnesses to the reign of terror. Metaxas presided over the nightmare prowl like a sawed-off Satan, cavorting with his Blue friends and even fingering one or two victims for them.

In the morning it seemed like a dream. The phantoms of violence vanished with the night; by pale winter sunlight we inspected the city and

listened to Metaxas' historical commentary.

"Justinian," he said, "was a great conqueror, a great lawgiver, a great diplomat, and a great builder. This is history's verdict. We also have the *Secret History* of Procopius, which says that Justinian was both a knave and a fool, and that his wife Theodora was a demonic whorish villainess. I know this Procopius: a good man, a clever writer, something of a puritan, a little too gullible. But he's right about Justinian and Theodora. Justinian is a great man in the great things and a terribly evil man in the petty things. Theodora—" he spat—"is a whore among whores. She dances naked at dinners of state; she exhibits her body in public; she sleeps with her servants. She's every bit as depraved as Procopius claims."

Metaxas' eyes twinkled. I knew without being told that he must have shared Theodora's bed.

Later that day he whispered, "I can arrange it for you. The risks are slight. Did you ever dream you could sleep with the Empress of Byzantium?"

"The risks—"

"What risks? You have your timer! You can get free! Listen to me, boy, she's an acrobat! She *consumes* you. I can fix it up for you. The Empress of Byzantium! Justinian's wife!"

"Not this trip," I blurted. "Some other time. I'm still too new at this business."

"You're afraid of her."

"I'm not ready to sleep with an empress just yet," I said solemnly.

"Everybody else does it!"

"Couriers?"

"Most of them."

"On my next trip," I promised.

The idea appalled me. I had to turn it off somehow. Metaxas misunderstood; I wasn't shy, or afraid of being caught by Justinian, or anything like that; but I couldn't bring myself to intersect with history that way. Traveling up the line was still fantasy for me; having the celebrated monstress Theodora would make the fantasy all too real. Metaxas laughed at me, and for a while I think he felt contempt for me. But afterward he said, "It's okay. Don't let me rush you into things. When you're ready for her, though, don't miss her. I recommend her personally."

XXVI

We stayed around for a couple of days to watch the early phases of the riots. The New Year's Games were about to begin, and the Blues and Greens were growing more unruly. Their roughnecking was verging on anarchy; no one was safe in the streets after dark. Justinian worriedly ordered the factions to halt their maraudings, and various ringleaders were arrested. Seven were condemned to death, four by decapitation because they were caught carrying weapons, three by hanging on grounds of conspiracy.

Metaxas took us to see the performance. One of the Blues survived his first hanging when the rope broke under his weight. The imperial guards put him up there again, and again the gallows couldn't finish him, though the rope left fiery marks on his throat. So they put him aside for a while and strung up a Green, and bungled that job twice too; they were about to put the battered victims through a third hanging apiece when some outraged

monks came boiling out of their monastery, grabbed the men in the midst of the confusion, and spirited them across the Golden Horn by rowboat to sanctuary in some church. Metaxas, who had seen all this before, cackled wildly at the fun. It seemed to me that his face peered at me from a thousand places in the crowd that had turned out for the executions.

Then the racing season began at the Hippodrome, and we went as guests of Metaxas' friendly gang of Blues. We had plenty of company; 100,000 Byzantines were in the stands. The tiers of marble seats were crowded far past capacity, but space had been saved for us.

I hunted for myself in the stands, knowing that I sat somewhere else here with Capistrano and that tour; but in the crush I couldn't catch a glimpse of myself. I saw plenty of Metaxas, though.

It was the third day of the races—the fatal day. An ugly mood gripped this arena where emperors had been made and unmade. Yesterday and the day before, I knew, there had been nasty outcries when Justinian appeared in the imperial box; the crowd had yelled to him to free the imprisoned ringleaders of the factions, but he had ignored the shouts and let the races proceed. Today, January 13, Constantinople would erupt. Time-tourists love catastrophes; this would be a good one. I knew. I had seen it already.

Below, officials were completing the preliminary rituals. Imperial guards, standards flying, paraded grandly. Those leaders of the Blues and Greens who were not in jail exchanged chilly ceremonial greetings. Now the mob stirred, and Justinian entered his box,

a man of middle height, rather plump, with a round, florid face. Empress Theodora followed.

Justinian mounted the steps of his box. The cries began: "Free them! Let them out!" Serenely he lifted a fold of his purple robe and blessed the audience with the sign of the Cross, three times, once toward the center block of seats, then to the right, then to the left. The uproar grew. He threw a white kerchief down. Let the games begin! Theodora stretched and yawned. The stable doors burst open. Out came the first four chariots.

They were quadrigas, four-horse vehicles; the audience forgot about politics as, wheel to wheel, the chariots went into action. Metaxas said pleasantly, "Theodora has been to bed with each of the drivers. I wonder which one is her favorite." The empress looked profoundly bored. I had been surprised to find her here, the last time; I had thought that empresses were barred from the Hippodrome. As indeed they were, but Theodora made her own rules.

The charioteers hustled down to the *spina*, the row of monuments, and came round and back up the course. A race ran seven rounds; seven ostrich eggs were set out on a stand, and as each round was completed one egg was removed. We watched two races. Then Metaxas said, "Let us shunt forward by one hour and get to the climax of this." Only Metaxas would pull a bit like that: we adjusted all the timers and shunted, *en masse*, in casual disregard of the rules for public jumping. When we reappeared in the Hippodrome the sixth race was about to begin.

"Now starts the trouble," said Me-

taxas happily.

The race was run. But as the victor came forth to receive his crown, a booming voice bellowed from out of a group of Blues, "Long live the Greens and Blues!"

An instant later, from the seats of the Greens, came the answering cry: "Long live the Blues and Greens!"

"The factions are uniting against Justinian," Metaxas said, quietly, schoolmasterishly. The chaos that was engulfing the stadium didn't ruffle him.

"Long live the Greens and Blues!"

"Long live the Blues and Greens!"

"Long live the Greens and Blues!"

"Long live the Blues and Greens!"

"Victory!"

"Victory!"

"Victory!"

And the one word, "Victory!" became a mighty cry from thousands of throats. "*Nika! Nika!* Victory!"

Theodora laughed. Justinian, scowling, conferred with officers of his imperial guard. Greens and Blues marched from the Hippodrome, followed by a happy, screaming mob bent on destruction. We hung back, keeping a judicious distance; I caught sight of other equally cautious little groups of spectators, and knew they were no Byzantines.

Torches flared in the streets. The imperial prison was aflame. The prisoners were free, the jailers were burning. Justinian's own guard, afraid to interfere, looked on soberly. The rioters piled faggots against the gate of the Great Palace, across the plaza from the Hippodrome. soon the palace was burning. Theodosius' Haghia Sophia was aflame; bearded priests, waving precious icons, appeared on its blazing roof and toppled back into the inferno.

The senate house caught fire. It was a glorious orgy of destruction. Whenever snarling rioters approached us, we adjusted timers and shunted down the line, taking care to jump no more than ten or fifteen minutes at a hop, so that we wouldn't reappear right inside some fire that hadn't been set when we shunted.

"*Nika! Nika!*"

Constantinople's sky was black with oily smoke, and flames danced on the horizon. Metaxas, his wedge-shaped face smudged and sooty, his eyes glinting with excitement, seemed constantly on the verge of breaking away from us and going to join the destroyers.

"The firemen themselves are looting," he called to us. "And look—the Blues burn the houses of the Greens, and the Greens burn the houses of the Blues!"

A tremendous exodus was under way, as terrified citizens streamed toward the docks and begged the boatmen to ferry them to the Asian side. Unharmed, invulnerable, we moved through the holocaust, witnessing the walls of the old Haghia Sophia collapse, watching flames sweep the Great Palace, observing the behavior of the looters and the arsonists and the rapists.

Metaxas skilfully edited the riots for us; he had timed everything dozens of visits ago, and he knew exactly which highlights to hit.

"Now we shunt forward six hours and forty minutes," he said.

"Now we jump three hours and eight minutes."

"Now we jump an hour and a half."

"Now we jump two days."

We saw everything that mattered. With the city still aflame, Justinian sent bishops and priests forth bearing

sacred relics, a piece of the True Cross, the rod of Moses, the horn of Abraham's ram, the bones of martyrs; the frightened clerics paraded bravely about, asking for a miracle, but no miracles came, only cascades of brick-bats and stones. A general led forty guardsmen out to protect the holy men. "That is the famous Belisarius," said Metaxas. Messages came from the emperor, announcing the deposing of unpopular officials; but churches were sacked, the imperial library given the torch, the baths of Zeuxippus were destroyed. On the eighteenth of January Justinian was bold enough to appear publicly in the Hippodrome to call for peace. He was hissed down by the Greens and fled as stone-throwing began. We saw a worthless prince named Hypatius proclaimed as emperor by the rebels in the Square of Constantine; we saw General Belisarius march through the smoldering city in defense of Justinian; we saw the butchery of the insurgents.

We saw everything. I understood why Metaxas was the most coveted of Couriers. Capistrano had done his best to give his people an exciting show, but he had wasted too much time in the early phases. Metaxas, leaping brilliantly over hours and days, unveiled the entire catastrophe for us, and brought us at last to the morning when order was restored and a shaken Justinian rode through the charred ruins of Constantinople. By a red dawn we saw the clouds of ash still dancing in the air. Justinian studied the blackened hull of Haghia Sophia, and we studied Justinian.

Metaxas said, "He is planning the new cathedral. He will make it the greatest shrine since Solomon's Temple

in Jerusalem. Come: we have seen enough destruction. Now let us see the birth of beauty. Down the line, all of you! Five years and ten months down the line, and behold Haghia Sophia!"

XXVII

"On your next layoff," said Metaxas, "visit me at my villa. I live there now in 1105. It is a good time to be in Byzantium; Alexius Comnenus rules and rules wisely. I'll have a lusty wench ready for you, and plenty of wine. You'll come?"

I was lost in admiration for the sharp-faced little man. We were nearing the end of our tour, with only the Turkish Conquest yet to do, and he had revealed to me in a stunning way the difference between an inspired Courier and a merely competent one.

Only a lifetime of dedication to the task could achieve such results, could provide such a show.

Metaxas hadn't just taken us to the standard highlights. He had shown us any number of minor events, splicing us in for an hour here, two hours there, creating for us a glorious mosaic of Byzantine history that dimmed the luster of the mosaics of Haghia Sophia. Other Couriers made a dozen stops, perhaps; Metaxas made more than fifty. Metaxas was completely at home in Byzantium in any one of a thousand years. Coolly, easily, confidently, he ranged through the eras.

The villa he maintained was a mark of his confidence and his audacity. No other Courier had ever dared to create a second identity for himself up the line, spending all his holidays as a citizen of the past. Metaxas ran his villa on a now-time basis; when he had to

leave it for two weeks to run a tour, he took care to return to it two weeks after his departure. He never overlapped himself, never let himself go to it at a time when he was already in residence; there was only one Metaxas permitted to use it, and that was the now-time Metaxas. He had bought the villa ten years ago in his double now-time: 2049 down the line, 1095 in Byzantium. And he had maintained his basis with precision; it was ten years later for him in both places. I promised to visit him in 1105. It would be an honor, I said.

He grinned and said, "I'll introduce you to my great-great-multi-great-grandmother when you come, too. She's great in bed. You remember what I told you about sleeping with your own ancestors? There's nothing finer!"

I was stunned. "Does she know who you are?"

"Don't talk nonsense," said Metaxas. "Would I break the first rule of the Time Service? Would I even hint to anyone up the line that I came from the future? *Would I?* Even Themistoklis Metaxas abides by *that* rule!"

Like the moody Capistrano, Metaxas had devoted much effort to hunting out his ancestors. His motives were altogether different, though. Capistrano was plotting an elaborate suicide, but Metaxas was obsessed with transtemporal incest.

"Isn't it risky?" I asked.

"Just take your pills and you're safe, and so is she."

"I mean the Time Patrol—"

"You make sure they don't find out," said Metaxas. "That way it isn't risky."

"If you happen to get her pregnant,

you might become your own ancestor."

"Groovy," said Metaxas.

"But—"

"People don't get people pregnant by accident any more, boy. Of course," he added, "some day I might want to knock her up on purpose."

I felt the time-winds blowing up a gale.

I said, "You're talking anarchy!"

"Nihilism, to be more accurate. Look here, Jud, look at this book. I've got all my female ancestors listed, hundreds of them, from the nineteenth century back to the tenth. Nobody else in the world has a book like this except maybe some snotty ex-kings and queens, and even they don't have it this complete."

"There's Capistrano," I said.

"He goes back only to the fourteenth century! Anyway, he's sick in the head. You know why he does his genealogies?"

"Yes."

"He's pretty sick, isn't he?"

"Yes," I said. "But tell me, why are you so eager to sleep with your own ancestors?"

"Do you really want to know?"

"Really."

Metaxas said, "My father was a cold, hateful man. He beat his children every morning before breakfast for exercise. *His* father was a cold, hateful man. He forced his children to live like slaves. *His* father—I come from a long line of tyrannical authoritarian dictatorial males. I despise them all. It is my form of rebellion against the father-image. I go on and on through the past, seducing the wives and sisters and daughters of these men whom I loathe. Thus I puncture their icy smugness."

"In that case, then, to be perfectly consistent, you must have—your own mother—begun with—"

"I draw the line at abominations," said Metaxas.

"I see."

"But my grandmother, yes! And several great-grandmothers! And on and on and on!" His eyes glowed. It was a divine mission with him. "I have ploughed through twenty, thirty generations already, and I will keep on for thirty more!" Metaxas laughed his shrill satanic laugh. "Others seduce at random; Metaxas seduces *systematically*! It gives meaning and structure to my life. This interests you, eh?"

"Well—"

"It is life's most intense joy, what I do. Why don't you try it?"

"Well—"

"They tell me you are of Greek descent."

"On my mother's side, yes."

"Then probably your ancestors lived right here in Constantinople. No Greek worth anything would have lived in Greece itself at this time. At this very moment a luscious ancestress of yours is in this very city!"

"Well—"

"Find her!" cried Metaxas. "Take her! It is joy! It is ecstasy! Defy space and time! Stick your finger in God's eye!"

"I'm not sure I really want to," I said. But I did.

XXVIII

As I say, Metaxas transformed my life. He changed my destinies in many ways, not all of them good. But one good thing he did for me was to give me confidence. His charisma and his

chutzpah both rubbed off on me. I learned arrogance from Metaxas.

Up until this point I had been a modest and self-effacing young man, at least while I was around my elders. Especially in my Time Service aspect I had been unpushy and callow. I did a lot of forelock-tugging and no doubt came across even more naive than I really was. I acted this way because I was young and had a lot to learn, not only about myself, which everybody does, but also about the workings of the Time Service. So far I had met a lot of men who were older, smarter, slicker, and more corrupt than myself, and I had treated them with deference: Sam, Dajani, Jeff Monroe, Sid Buonocore, Capistrano. But now I was with Metaxas, who was the oldest, smartest, slickest, and most corrupt of them all, and he imparted momentum to me, so that I stopped orbiting other men and took up a trajectory of my own.

Later I found out that this is one of Metaxas' functions in the Time Service. He takes moist-eyed young Couriers-in-training and fills them full of the swagger they need to be successful operators in their own right.

When I got back from my tour with Metaxas I no longer feared my first solo as a Courier. I was ready to go. Metaxas had showed me how a Courier can be a kind of artist, assembling a portrait of the past for his clients, and that was what I wanted to be. The risks and responsibilities didn't trouble me now.

Protopopulos said, "When you come back from your layoff, you'll take six people out on the one-week tour."

"I'll skip the layoff. I'm ready to leave right now!"

"Well, your tourists aren't. Anyway, the law says you've got to rest between trips. So rest. I'll see you back here in two weeks, Jud."

So I had a holiday against my will. I was tempted to accept Metaxas' invitation to his villa in 1105, but it occurred to me that maybe Metaxas had had enough of my company for a while. Then I toyed with the idea of signing up with a time-tour to Hastings or Waterloo or even back to the Crucifixion to count the Dajanis. But I passed that up, too. Now that I was on the threshold of leading a tour myself, I didn't want to have to be led by somebody else, not just at the moment. I needed to be more secure in my newfound confidence before I dropped down under some other Courier's leadership again.

I dithered around in now-time Istanbul for three days, doing nothing special. Mainly I hung around the Time Service headquarters, playing stochastic chess with Kolettis and Melamed, who also happened to be off duty at this time. On the fourth day I hopped a shortshot for Athens. I didn't know why I was going there until I got there.

I was up on the Acropolis when I realized what my mission was. I was wandering around the ruins, fending off the peddlers of hologram slides and the guided-tour hucksters, when an advert globe came drifting toward me. It hovered about four feet away from me at eye level, radiating a flickering green glow designed to compel my attention, and said, "Good afternoon. We hope you're enjoying your visit to 21st-century Athens. Now that you've seen the picturesque ruins, how would you like to see the Parthenon as it

really looked? See the Greece of Socrates and Aristophanes? Your local Time Service office is on Aeolou Street, just opposite the Central Post Office, and —"

Half an hour later I checked in at the Aeolou Street headquarters, identified myself as a Courier on vacation, and outfitted myself for a shunt up the line.

Not to the Greece of Socrates and Aristophanes, though.

I was heading for the Greece of the prosaic year 1997, when Konstantin Passalidis was elected Mayor of Sparta.

Konstantin Passalidis was my mother's father. I was about to start tracing my ancestral seed back to its sprouting place.

Dressed in the stark, itchy clothes of the late twentieth century, and carrying crisp and colorful obsolete banknotes, I shunted back sixty years and caught the first pod from Athens to Sparta. Pod service was brand new in Greece in 1997, and I was in mortal terror of a phaseout all the way down, but the alignment held true and I got to Sparta in one piece.

Sparta was remarkably hideous.

The present Sparta is not, of course, a linear descendant of the old militaristic place that caused so much trouble for Athens. That Sparta faded away gradually and vanished altogether in medieval times. The new Sparta was founded in the early nineteenth century on the old site. In Grandfather Passalidis' heyday it was a city of about 80,000 people, having grown rapidly after the installation of Greece's first fusion-power plant there in the 1980's.

It consisted of hundreds of identical apartment houses of gray brick, arranged in perfectly straight rows. Every

one of them was ten stories high, decked with lemon-colored balconies on every floor, and about as appealing as a jail. At one end of this barracks-like city was the shining dome of the power plant; at the other was a downtown section of taverns, banks, and municipal offices. It was quite charming, if you find brutality charming.

I got off the pod and walked downtown. There weren't any master information outputs to be seen on the streets—I guess the network hadn't yet gone into operation here—but I had no trouble finding Mayor Passilidis. I stopped into a tavern for a quick *ouzo* and said, "Where can I find Mayor Passilidis?" and a dozen friendly Spartans escorted me to City Hall.

His receptionist was a dark-haired girl of about twenty with big breasts and a faint mustache. Her Minoan Revival bodice was neatly calculated to distract a man's attention from the shortcomings of her face. She said huskily, "Can I help you?"

"I'd like to see Mayor Passilidis. I'm from an American newspaper. We're doing an article on Greece's ten most dynamic young men, and we feel that Mr. Passilidis—"

It didn't sound convincing even to me. But she bought the story unhesitatingly, and with a minimum of delay I was escorted into His Honor's office.

"A pleasure to have you here," my grandfather said in perfect English. "Won't you sit down? Can I get you a martini, maybe? Or if you'd prefer a weed—"

I froze. I panicked. I didn't even take his hand when he offered it to me.

The sight of Konstantin Passalidis

terrified me.

I had never seen my grandfather before, of course. He was gunned down by an Abolitionist hoodlum in 2010, long before I was born—one of the many victims of the Year of Assassins.

Time-travel had never seemed so frighteningly real to me as it did right now. Justinian in the imperial box at the Hippodrome was nothing at all compared to Konstantin Passalidis greeting me in his office in Sparta.

He was in his early thirties, a boy wonder of his time. His hair was dark and curly, just beginning to gray at the fringes, and he wore a little clipped mustache and a ring in his left ear. What terrified me so much was our physical resemblance. He could have been my older brother.

After an endless moment I snapped out of my freeze. He was a little puzzled, I guess, but he courteously offered me refreshment again, and I declined, telling him I didn't indulge, and somehow I found enough poise to launch my "interview" of him.

We talked about his political career and all the wonderful things he planned to do for Sparta and for Greece. Just as I was starting to work the conversation around to the personal side, to his family background, he looked at his watch and said, "It's time for lunch. Will you be my guest?"

What he had in mind was a typical Mediterranean siesta, closing the office down for three hours and going home. We drove there in his little electric runabout, with the mayor himself at the steering rod. He lived in one of the gray apartment houses, like any ordinary citizen: four humble rooms on the fifth floor.

"I'd like you to meet my wife," Mayor Passalidis said. "Katina, this is an American newspaperman, Jud Elliott. He wants to write about my career."

I stared at my grandmother.

My grandmother stared at me.

We both gasped. We were both amazed.

XXIX

She was beautiful, the way the girls on the Minoan murals are beautiful. Dark, very dark, with black hair, olive skin, dark eyes. Peasant strength to her. She didn't expose her breasts the way the fashionable mustachioed receptionist had done, but her thin blouse wasn't very concealing. They were high and round. Her hips were broad. She was lush, fertile, abundant. I suppose she was about 23 years old, perhaps 24.

It was lust at first sight. Her beauty, her simplicity, her warmth, captivated me instantly. I felt a familiar tickling and a familiar tightening. I longed for her.

This was not a Metaxian incestuous wish. It was an innocent and purely animal reaction.

In that onrushing tide of yearning I didn't even think of her as my grandmother. I thought of her only as a young and fantastically desirable woman. A couple of ticks later I realized on an emotional level who she was, and I went limp at once.

She was Grandma Passilidis. And I remembered Grandma Passilidis.

I used to visit her at the senior citizens' camp near Tampa. She died when I was 14, in '49, and though she was only in her seventies, then,

she had always seemed terribly old and decrepit to me, a withered, shrunken, palsied little woman who wore black clothing all the time. Only her eyes—my God, her dark, liquid, warm, shining eyes!—had ever given any hint that she might once have been a healthy and vital human being.

Grandma Passilidis had had all kinds of diseases, feminine things first, prolapses of the uterus or whatever it is they get, and then kidney breakdowns and the rest. She had been through a dozen or more organ transplants, but nothing had helped, and all through my childhood she had inexorably declined. I was always hearing of some new crisis on her road to the grave, the poor old lady!

Here was the same poor old lady, miraculously relieved of her burden of years.

Young Mrs. Passilidis' reaction to me was equally potent, although not at all lustful. For her, sex began and ended with the mayoral pecker. She stared at me not in desire but in astonishment and blurted finally, "Konstantin, he looks just like you!"

"Indeed?" said Mayor Passilidis. He hadn't noticed it before.

His wife propelled us both toward the livingroom mirror, giggling and excited. "Look!" she cried. "Look there! Like brothers, you are!"

"Amazing," said Mayor Passilidis.

"An incredible coincidence," I said. "Your hair is thicker, and I'm a little taller, but—"

"Yes! Yes!" The mayor clapped his hands. "Can it be that we are related?"

"Impossible," I said solemnly. "My family's from Boston. Old New England stock. Nevertheless it is amazing.

You're sure you didn't have ancestors on the Mayflower, Mr. Passilidis?"

"Not unless there was a Greek steward on board."

"I doubt that."

"So do I. I am pure Greek on both sides for many generations," he said.

"I'd like to talk about that with you a little, if I could," I said casually. "For example, I'd like to know—"

Just then a sleepy and completely naked five-year-old girl came out of one of the bedrooms. She planted herself shamelessly before me and asked me who I was. How sweet, I thought.

Passilidis said proudly, "This is my daughter Diana."

A voice of thunder said in my brain, "THE NAKEDNESS OF THY MOTHER SHALT THOU NOT UNCOVER."

I looked away, shattered, and covered my confusion with a coughing fit. As though sensing that I saw something improper about the child's bareness, Katina Passilidis hustled a pair of panties onto her.

I was still shaking. Passilidis, puzzled, uncorked some retsina. We sat on the balcony in the bright midday light. Below, some school-children waved and shouted greetings to the mayor. Little Diana toddled out to be played with, and I tousled her fluffy hair and pressed the tip of her nose and felt very, very strange about all of this.

My grandmother provided a handsome lunch of boiled lamb and pastitsio. We went through a bottle and a half of retsina. I finished pumping the mayor about politics and shifted to the topic of his ancestors. "Have your people always lived in Sparta?" I asked.

"Oh, no," he said. "My grandfather's people came here a century ago from Cyprus. That is, on my father's side. On my mother's side I am Athenian, for many generations back."

"That's the Markezinis family?" I said.

He gave me a queer look. "Why, yes! How did you—"

"Something I came across while I was reading up on you," I said hurriedly.

Passilidis let the point pass. Now that he was on the subject of his family he grew expansive—maybe it was the wine—and favored me with the genealogical details. "My father's people were on Cyprus for at least a thousand years," he said. "There was a Passalidis there when the Crusaders came. On the other hand, my mother's ancestors came to Athens only in the nineteenth century, after the defeat of the Turks. Before that they lived in Shqiperi—"

"Shqiperi?"

"Albania. They settled there in the thirteenth century when the Latins seized Constantinople. And then they remained, through the Serbians, through the Turks, through the time of Skanderbeg the rebel, always retaining their Greek heritage against all difficulties."

My ears prickled. "You mentioned Constantinople? You can trace your ancestry there?"

Passalidis smiled. "Do you know Byzantine history?"

"Slightly," I said.

"Perhaps you know that in the year 1204 the Crusaders seized Constantinople and ruled it for a while as a Latin kingdom. The Byzantine

nobility fled, and several new Byzantine splinter states formed, one in Asia Minor, one on the Black Sea, and one in the west, in Albania. My ancestors followed Michael Angelus Comnenus into Albania, rather than submit to the rule of the Crusaders."

"I see." I was trembling again. "And the family name? It was Markezinis even back then?"

"Oh, no, Markezinis is a late Greek name! In Byzantium we were of the Ducas family."

"You were?" I gasped. It was as if he had been a German claiming Hohenzollern blood, or an Englishman laying claim to Plantagenet genes. "Ducas! Really?"

I had seen the gleaming palaces of the Ducas family. I had watched forty proud Ducases march clad in cloth of gold through the streets of Constantinople, to celebrate the rise of their cousin Constantine to the imperial throne. If Passalidis was a Ducas, I was a Ducas.

"Of course," he said, "the family was very large, and I believe we were of a minor branch. Still, it is something to take pride in, descent from such a family."

"It certainly is. Could you give me the names of any of your Byzantine ancestors, maybe? The first names?"

I must have sounded as though I planned to look them up the next time I was in Byzantium. Which I did, but Passalidis wasn't supposed to suspect that, because time-travel hadn't been invented yet.

He frowned and said, "Do you need this for the article you are writing?"

"No, not really. I'm just curious."

"You seem to know more than a little about Byzantium." It worried him

that an American barbarian would recognize the name of a famous Byzantine family.

I said, "Just casual knowledge. I studied it in school."

"Sadly, I can give you no names. This information has not come down to us. But perhaps some day, when I have retired from politics, I will search the old records—"

My grandmother poured us more wine, and I stole a quick, guilty peek at her full, swaying breasts. My mother climbed on my knee and made little trilling noises. My grandfather shook his head and said, "It is very surprising, the way you resemble me. Can I take your photograph?"

I wondered if it went against Time Patrol regulations. I decided that it probably did. But also I saw no polite way to refuse such a trifling request.

My grandmother produced a camera. Passalidis and I stood side by side and she took a picture of us for him, and then one for me. She pulled them from the camera when they were developed and we studied them intently.

"Like brothers," she said over and over. "Like brothers!"

I destroyed my print as soon as I was out of the apartment. But I suppose that somewhere in my mother's papers there is an old and faded flattie photo showing her father as a young man, standing beside a somewhat younger man who looks very much like him, and whom my mother probably assumed was some forgotten uncle of hers. Perhaps the photo still exists. I'd be afraid to look.

XXX

Grandfather Passilidis had saved me a great deal of trouble. He had lopped almost eight centuries off what I was already starting to think of as my quest.

I jumped down the line to now-time, did some research in the Time Service headquarters at Athens, and had myself outfitted as a Byzantine noble of the late twelfth century, with a sumptuous silk tunic, black cloak, and white bonnet. Then I podded up north to Albania, getting off at the town of Gjinokaster. In the old days this town was known as Argyrokastro, in the district of Epirus.

From Gjinokaster I went up the line to the year 1205.

The peasant folk of Argyrokastro were awed by my princely garb. I told them I was seeking the court of Michael Angelus Comnenus, and they told me the way and sold me a donkey to help me get there. I found Michael and the rest of the exiled Byzantines holding a chariot race in an improvised Hippodrome at the foot of a range of jagged hills. Quietly I affiliated myself with the crowd.

"I'm looking for Ducas," I told a harmless-looking old man who was passing around some wine.

"Ducas? Which one?"

"Are there many here? I bear a message from Constantinople for a Ducas, but they did not tell me there was more than one."

The old man laughed. "Just before me," he said, "I see Nicephorus Ducas, John Ducas, Leo Ducas, George Ducas, Nicephorus Ducas the Younger, Michael Ducas, Simeon Ducas, and Dimetrios Ducas. I am unable to find

at the moment Eftimios Ducas, Leon-tios Ducas, Simeon Ducas the Tall, Constantine Ducas, and—let me think—Andronicus Ducas. Which member of the family, pray, do you seek?"

I thanked him and moved down the line.

In sixteenth-century Gjinokaster I asked about the Markezinis family. My Byzantine garb earned me some strange glances, but the Byzantine gold pieces I carried got me all the information I needed. One bezant and I was given the location of the Markezinis estate. Two bezants more and I had an introduction to the foreman of the Markezinis vineyard. Five bezants—a steep price—and I found myself nibbling grapes in the guest-hall of Gregory Markezinis, the head of the clan. He was a distinguished man of middle years with a flowing gray beard and burning eyes; he was stern but hospitable. As we talked, his daughters moved serenely about us, refilling our cups, bringing more grapes, cold legs of lamb, mounds of rice. There were three girls, possibly thirteen, fifteen, and seventeen years old. I took good care not to look too closely at them, knowing the jealous temperament of mountain chieftains.

They were beauties: olive skin, dark eyes, high breasts, full lips. They might have been sisters of my radiant grandmother Katina Passilidis. My mother Diana, I believe, looked this way in girlhood. The family genes are powerful ones.

Unless I happened to be climbing on the wrong branch of the tree, one of these girls was my great-great-multi-great-grandmother. And Gregory Markezinis was my great-great-great-multi-great-grandfather.

I introduced myself as a wealthy young Cypriote of Byzantine descent who was traveling the world in search of pleasure and adventure. Gregory, whose Greek was slightly contaminated by Albanian words (did his serfs speak Gheg or Tosk? I forget), had evidently never met a Cypriote before, since he accepted my accent as authentic. "Where have you been?" he asked.

Oh, I said, Syria and Libya and Egypt, and Rome and Paris and Lisbon, and to London to attend the coronation of Henry VIII, and Prague, and Vienna. And now I was working my way eastward again, into the Turkish domain, determined despite all risks to visit the graves of my ancestors in Constantinople.

He raised an eyebrow at the mention of ancestors. Energetically hacking off a slice of lamb with his dagger, he said, "Was your family a high one in the old days?"

"I am of the Ducas line."

"Ducas?"

"Ducas," I said blandly.

"I am of the Ducas line as well."

"Indeed!"

"Beyond doubt!"

"A Ducas in Epirus!" I cried. "How did it happen?"

"We came here with the Comneni, after the Latin pigs took Constantinople."

"Indeed!"

"Beyond doubt!"

He called for more wine, the best in the house. When his daughters appeared he did a little dance, crying, "A kinsman! A kinsman! The stranger is a kinsman! Give him proper greeting!"

I found myself engulfed in Markezinis daughters, overwhelmed by

taut youthful breasts and sweet musky bodies. Chastely I embraced them, as a long-lost cousin would.

Over thick, elderly wine we talked genealogy. I went first, picking a Ducas at random—Theodoros—and claiming that he had escaped to Cyprus after the debacle in Constantinople in 1204 to found my line. Markezinis had no way of disproving that, and in fact he accepted it at face value. I unreeled a long list of Ducas forebears up the line between myself and distant Theodoros, using customary Byzantine names. When I concluded I said, "And you, Gregory?"

Using his knife to scratch family trees into the tabletop at some of the difficult points, Markezinis traced his line back to a Nicholas Markezinis of the late fourteenth century who had married the eldest daughter of Manuel Ducas of Argyrokastro, that Ducas having had only daughters and therefore bringing his immediate line to an end. From Manuel, then, Markezinis took things back in a leisurely way to the expulsion of the Byzantines from Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade. The particular Ducas of his direct line who had fled to Albania was, he said, Simeon.

My gonads plunged in despair.

"Simeon?" I said. "Do you mean Simeon Ducas the Tall, or the other one?"

"Where there two? How could you know?"

Cheeks flaming, I improvised, "I have to confess that I am something of a student of the family. Two Simeon Ducases followed the Comneni to this land, Simeon the Tall and a man of shorter stature."

"Of this I know nothing," said

Markezinis. "I have been taught that my ancestor's name was Simeon. And his father was Nicephorus, whose palace was close to the church of St. Theodosia, by the Golden Horn. The Venetians burned the palace of Nicephorus when they took the city in 1204. And the father of Nicephorus—" He hesitated, shaking his head slowly and sadly from side to side like an aging buffalo. "I do not remember the name of the father of Nicephorus. I have forgotten the name of the father of Nicephorus. Was it Leo? Michael? Basil? I forget. My head is full of wine."

"It does not matter that much," I said. With the ancestry traced into Constantinople, there would be no further difficulties.

"Romanos? John? Isaac? It is right here, inside my head, but there are so many names—so many names—"

Still muttering names, he fell asleep at the table.

A dark-eyed daughter showed me to a drafty bedroom. I could have shunted instead, having learned all here that I had come to know; but it seemed civil to spend the night under my multi-great-grandfather's roof, rather than vanishing like a thief. I stripped, snuffed the candle, got into bed.

In the darkness a soft-bodied wench joined me under the blankets. I couldn't see her, but I assumed she must be one of Markezinis' three daughters, coming to show how hospitable the family could be.

I felt obscurely disappointed at the thought that Markezinis' daughters would give themselves so freely to strangers—even a noble stranger claiming to be a cousin. After all, these

were my *ancestors*. Was my line of descent muddled by casual wayfarers?

That thought led logically to the really troublesome one, which was, if this girl is really my great-great-multi-great grandmother, what am *I* doing in bed with her? To hell with sleeping with strangers—should she sleep with descendants? When I began this quest at Metaxas' prodding, it wasn't really with the intent of committing trans-temporal incest . . . but yet here I was doing it, it seemed.

Guilt blossomed in me.

I soothed my conscience by telling myself that the chances were two out of three that this girl was merely my great-great-multi-great-aunt, in which case the incest must surely be far less serious. So far as bloodlines went, the connection between myself and any sixteenth-century aunt must be exceedingly cloudy.

My conscience let me alone after that. And then she rose, and went from the room, and as she passed the window a sliver of moonlight illuminated her white body and her long blonde hair, and I realized what I should have known all along, which is that the Markezinis girls would not come like Eskimo wenches to sleep with guests, but that someone had thoughtfully sent in a slavegirl for my amusement. So much for the prickings of conscience. Absolved even of the most tenuous incest, I slept soundly.

In the morning, over a breakfast of cold lamb and rice, Gregory Markezinis said, "Word reaches me that the Spaniards have found a new world beyond the Ocean Sea. Do you think there's truth in it?"

This was the year 1556 A.D.

I said, "Beyond all doubt it's true

I saw the proof in Spain, at the court of King Charles. It's a world of gold and jade and spices—of red-skinned men—"

"Red-skinned men? Oh, no, cousin Ducas, no, no, I can never believe that!" Markezinis roared in delight, and summoned his daughters. "The new world of the Spaniards—its men have red skins! Cousin Ducas tells us so!"

"Well, copper-colored, really," I murmured, but Markezinis scarcely heard.

"Red skins! Red skins! And no heads, but eyes and mouths in their chests! And men with a single leg, which they raise above their heads at midday to shield themselves from the sun! Yes! Yes! Oh, wonderful new world! Cousin, you amuse me!"

I told him I was glad to bring him such pleasure. I thanked him for his gracious hospitality, and chastely embraced each of his daughters, and prepared to take my leave. And suddenly it struck me that if my ancestors' name had been Markezinis from the fourteenth century through the twentieth, then none of these girls could possibly be ancestral to me. My priggish pangs of conscience had been pointless, except insofar as they taught me where my inhibitions lay. "Do you have sons?" I asked my host.

"Oh, yes," he said, "six sons!"

"May your line increase and prosper," I said, and departed, and rode my donkey a dozen kilometers out into the countryside, and tethered it to an olive tree, and shunted down the line.

XXXI

At the end of my layoff I reported for duty, and set out for the first time

solo as a Time Courier.

I had six people to take on the one-week tour. They didn't know it was my first solo. Protopopodos didn't see any point in telling them, and I agreed. But I didn't *feel* as though it were my first solo. I was full of Metaxianchutzpah. I emanated charisma. I feared nothing except fear itself.

At the preliminary meeting I told my six the rules of time-touring in crisp, staccato phrases. I invoked the dread menace of the Time Patrol as I warned against changing the past either carelessly or by design. I explained how they could best keep out of trouble. Then I handed out timers and set them.

"Here we go," I said. "Up the line."

Jud Elliott, Time Courier, on his own!

Up the line!

"We have arrived," I said, "in 1659 B.P., better known to you as the year 400. I've picked it as a typical early Byzantine time. The ruling emperor is Arcadius. You remember, from now-time Istanbul that Haghia Sophia should be back there, and the mosque of Sultan Ahmed should be there. Well, of course, Sultan Ahmed and his mosque are currently a dozen centuries in the future, and the church behind us is the original Haghia Sophia, constructed forty years ago when the city was still very young. Four years from now it'll burn down during a rebellion caused by the exiling of Bishop John Chrysostomos by Emperor Arcadius after he had criticized Arcadius' wife Eudoxia. Let's go inside. You see that the walls are of stone but the roof is wooden—"

My six tourists included a real-estate developer from Ohio, his wife, their gawky daughter, and her husband,

plus a Sicilian shrink and his bow-legged temporary wife: a typical assortment of prosperous citizens. They didn't know a nave from a narthex, but I gave them a good look at the church, and then marched them through Arcadius' Constantinople to set the background for what they'd see later. After two hours of this I jumped them down the line to 408 to watch the baptism of little Theodosius again.

I caught sight of myself on the far side of the street, standing close to Capistrano. I didn't wave. My other self did not appear to see me. I wondered if this present self of mine had been standing here that other time, when I was here with Capistrano. The intricacies of the Cumulative Paradox oppressed me. I banished them from mind.

"You see the ruins of the old Haghia Sophia," I said. "It will be rebuilt under the auspices of this infant, the future Theodosius II, and opened to prayer on the 10th of October, 445—"

We shunted down the line to 445 and watched the ceremony of dedication.

There are two schools of thought about the proper way to conduct a time-tour. The Capistrano method is to take the tourists to four or five high spots a week, letting them spend plenty of time in taverns, inns, back alleys, and marketplaces, and moving in such a leisurely way that the flavor of each period soaks in deeply. The Metaxes method is to construct an elaborate mosaic of events, hitting the same high spots but also twenty or thirty or forty lesser events, spending half an hour here and two hours there. I had experienced both methods and I preferred Metaxes' approach. The serious student of Byzantium wants depth,

not breadth; but these folk were not serious students. Better to make a pageant of Byzantium for them, hurry them breathless through the eras, show them riots and coronations, chariot races, the rise and fall of monuments and kings.

And so I took my people from time to time in imitation of my idol Metaxas. I gave them a full day in early Byzantium, as Capistrano would have done, but I split it into six shunts. We ended our day's work in 537, in the city Justinian had built on the charred ruin of the one destroyed by the rioting Blues and Greens.

"We've come to December 27," I said. "Justinian will inaugurate the new Haghia Sophia today. You see how much larger the cathedral is than the ones that preceded it—a gigantic building, one of the wonders of the world. Justinian has poured the equivalent of hundreds of millions of dollars into it."

"Is this the one they have in Istanbul now?" asked Mr. Real Estate's son-in-law doubtfully.

"Basically, yes. Except that you don't see any minarets here—the Moslems tacked those on, of course, after they turned the place into a mosque—and the gothic buttresses haven't been built yet, either. Also the great dome here is not the one you're familiar with. This one is slightly flatter and wider than the present one. It turned out that the architect's calculations of thrust were wrong, and half the dome will collapse in 558 after weakening of the arches by earthquakes. You'll see that tomorrow. Look, here comes Justinian."

A little earlier that day I had shown them the harried Justinian of 532 attempting to cope with the Nika riots.

The emperor who now appeared, riding in a chariot drawn by four immense black horses, looked a good deal more than five years older, far more plump and florid of face, but he also seemed vastly more sure of himself, a figure of total command. As well he should be, having surmounted the tremendous challenge to his power that the riots presented, and having rebuilt the city into something uniquely glorious.

Senators and dukes lined the approach; we remained respectfully to one side, amid the commoners. Priests, deacons, deaconesses, subdeacons, and cantors awaited the imperial procession, all in costly robes. Hymns in the ancient mode rose to heaven. The Patriarch Menos appeared at the colossal imperial door of the cathedral; Justinian dismounted; the patriarch, and the emperor, hand in hand, entered the building, followed by the high officials of state.

"According to a tenth-century chronicle," I said, "Justinian was overcome by emotion when he entered his new Hagia Sophia. Rushing to the apse, he gave thanks to God who had allowed him to achieve such a building, and cried out, 'O Solomon, I have surpassed thee.' The Time Service thought it might be interesting for visitors longer exist by 1175, the year of my immediate destination. I couldn't blindly shunt forward from the room, because I might find myself materializing in some awkward place later constructed on the site—a dungeon, say.

The only safe way would be to go out in the street and shunt from there, both coming and going. This, though, requires you to be away from your tourists more than sixty seconds, just figuring the time necessary to go downstairs, find a safe and quiet place

for your shunt, etc. And if a Time Patrolman comes along on a routine checkup and recognizes you in the street and asks you why the hell you aren't with the clients, you're in trouble.

Nevertheless I shunted down the line and got away with it.

I hadn't been in 1175 before. It was probably the last really good year Byzantium had.

It seemed to me that an atmosphere of gathering trouble hung over Constantinople. Even the clouds looked ominous. The air had the tang of impending calamity.

Subjective garbage. Being able to move freely along the line distorts your perspective and colors your interpretation. I knew what lay ahead for these people; they didn't. Byzantium in 1175 was cocky and optimistic; I was imagining all the omens.

Manuel I Comnenus was on the throne, a good man, coming to the end of a long, brilliant career. Disaster was closing in on him. The Comnenus emperors had spent the whole twelfth century recapturing Asia Minor from the Turks, who had grabbed it the century before. I knew that one year down the line in 1176 Manuel was going to lose his whole Asian empire in a single day, at the battle of Myrioccephalon. After that it would be downhill all the way for Byzantium. But Manuel didn't know that yet. Nobody here did. Except me.

I headed up toward the Golden Horn. The upper end of town was the most important in this period; the center of things had shifted from the Hagia Sophia/Hippodrome/Augustum section to the Blachernai quarter, in the northernmost corner of the city at the angle where the city walls met. Here, for some reason, Emperor Alex-

ius I had moved the court at the end of the eleventh century, abandoning the jumbled old Great Palace. Now his grandson Manuel reigned here in splendor, and the big feudal families had built new palaces nearby, all along the Golden Horn.

One of the finest of these marble edifices belonged to Nicephorus Ducas, my many-times-removed-great-grandfather.

I spent half the morning prowling around the palace grounds, getting drunk on the magnificence of it all. Toward midday the palace gate opened and I saw Nicephorus himself emerge in his chariot for his noontime drive: a stately figure with a long, ornately braided black beard and elaborate gold-trimmed robes. On his breast he wore a pendant cross, gilded and studded with huge jewels; his fingers glistened with rings. A crowd had gathered to watch the noble Nicephorus leave his palace.

tors to this era to hear this famous line, and so some years back we planted an Ear just beside the altar." I reached into my robes. "I've brought along a pickup speaker which will transmit Justinian's words to us as he nears the apse. Listen."

I switched the speaker on. At this moment, any number of other Couriers in the crowd were doing the same thing. A time will come when so many of us are clustered in this moment that Justinian's voice, amplified by a thousand tiny speakers, will boom majestically across the whole city.

From the speaker in my palm came the sound of footsteps.

"The emperor is walking down the aisle," I said.

The footsteps halted abruptly. Justinian's words came, to us—his first exclamation upon entering the archi-

tectural masterpiece of the ages.

Thick-voiced with rage, the emperor bellowed, "Look up there, you sodomitic simpleton! Find me the idiot who left that scaffold hanging in the dome! I want his head in an alabaster vase before mass begins!" Then he sneezed in imperial wrath.

I said to my six tourists, "The development of time-travel has made it necessary for us to revise many of our most inspiring anecdotes in the light of new evidence."

XXXII

That night as my tired tourists slept I slipped away from them to carry out some private research.

This was strictly against regulations. A Courier is supposed to remain with the clients at all times, in case an emergency occurs. The clients, after all, don't know how to operate their timers, so only the Courier can help them make a quick escape from trouble.

Despite this I jumped six centuries down the line, while my tourists slept, and I visited the era of my prosperous ancestor Nicephorus Ducas.

Which took chutzpah, of course, considering that this was my first solo trip. But actually I wasn't running any serious risks.

The safe way to carry out such side trips, as Metaxas had explained to me, is to set your timer carefully and make sure that your net absence from your tourists is one minute or less. I was departing from December 27, 537, at 2345 hours. I could go up or down the line from there and spend hours, days, weeks, or months elsewhere. When I had finished with my business, all I had to do was set my timer to bring me back to December 27, 537, at 2346 hours. From the point of view of my sleeping tourists I'd have been gone only sixty seconds.

Of course, it wouldn't be proper to land at 2344 hours on the return trip, which is to say to come back a minute before I had left. There would then be two of me in the same room, which produces the Paradox of Duplication, a subspecies of the Cumulative Paradox, and is certain to bring a reprimand or worse if the Time Patrol hears of it. No: precise coordination is necessary.

Another problem is the difficulty of making an exact point-to-point shunt. The inn where my group was lodged in 537 would almost certainly no

Gracefully he scattered coins to the multitude as he rode forth. I caught one: a thin, shabby bezant of Alexius I, nicked and filed at the edges. The Comnenus family had debased the currency badly. Still, it's no small thing to be able to toss even debased gold coins to a mob of miscellaneous on-lookers.

I have that worn and oily-looking bezant to this day. I think of it as my inheritance from my Byzantine multi-great-grandfather.

Nicephorus' chariot vanished in the direction of the imperial palace. A filthy old man standing beside me sighed, crossed himself many times, and murmured, "May the Savior bless the blessed Nicephorus! Such a wonderful person!"

The old man's nose had been lopped off at the base. He had also lost his left hand. The kindly Byzantines of this latter-day era had made mutilation the penalty for many minor crimes. A step forward; the Code of Justinian called for death in such cases. Better to lose eye or tongue or nose than life.

"Twenty years I spent in the service of Nicephorus Ducas!" the old man went on. "The finest years of my life,

they were."

"Why did you leave?" I asked.

He held forth the stump of his arm. "They caught me stealing books. I was a scribe, and I hungered to keep some of the books I copied. Nicephorus has so many! He would not have missed five or six! But they caught me and I lost my hand and also my employment, ten years ago."

"And your nose?"

"In that very harsh winter six years back I stole a barrel of fish. I am a very poor thief, always getting caught."

"How do you support yourself?"

He smiled. "By public charity. And by begging. Can you spare a silver nomisma for an unhappy old man?"

I inspected the coins I carried. By ill luck all my silver pieces were early ones, of the fifth and sixth centuries, long out of circulation; if the old man tried to pass one, he'd be arrested on charges of robbing some aristocratic collector, and probably would lose his other hand. So I pressed a fine gold bezant of the early eleventh century into his palm. He stared at it in amazement. "I am yours, noble sir!" he cried. "I am wholly yours!"

"Come with me to the nearest tavern, then, and answer a few questions," I said.

"Gladly! Gladly!"

I bought us wine and pumped him on the Ducas genealogy. It was hard for me to look at his mutilated face, and so as we talked I kept my eyes trained on his shoulder; but he seemed accustomed to that. He had all the information I was seeking, for one of his duties while in the service of the Ducases had been to copy out the family records.

Nicephorus, he said, was then 45 years old, having been born in 1130.

The wife of Nicephorus was the former Zoe Catacalon, and they had seven Children: Simeon, John, Leo, Basil, Helena, Theodosia, and Zoe. Nicephorus was the eldest son of Nicetas Ducas, born in 1106; the wife of Nicetas was the former Irene Cerularius, whom he had married in 1129. Nicetas and Irene had had five other children: Michael, Isaac, John, Romanos, and Anna. Nicetas' father had been Leo Ducas, born in 1070; Leo had married the former Pulcheria Botaniates in 1100, and their children, other than Nicetas, included Simeon, John, Alexander—

The recitation went on and on, carrying the Ducases back through the generations of Byzantium, into the tenth century, the ninth, the eighth, names growing cloudy now, gaps appearing in the record, the old man frowning, fumbling, apologizing for scanty data. I tried a couple of times to stop him, but he would not be stopped, until finally he sputtered out with a Tiberius Ducas of the seventh century whose existence, he said, was possibly apocryphal.

"This, you understand, is merely the lineage of Nicephorus Ducas," he said. "The imperial family is a distinct branch, which I can trace back for you through the Comneni to Emperor Constantine X and his ancestors, who—"

Those Ducases didn't interest me, even though they were distantly related to me in some way. If I wanted to know the lineage of the imperial Ducases, I could find it in Gibbon. I cared only for my own humbler branch of the family, the collateral offshoot from the imperial line. Thanks to this hideous outcast scribe I was able to secure the path of those Ducases through three Byzantine centuries,

down to Nicephorus. And I already knew the rest of the line, from Nicephorus's son Simeon of Albania to Simeon's several-times-grandson Manuel Ducas of Argyrokastro, whose eldest daughter had married Nicholas Markezinis, and on through the Markezinis line until a Markezinis daughter married a Passalidis son and produced my estimable grandfather Konstantin, whose daughter Diana wed Judson Daniel Elliott II and brought forth into the world my own ultimate self.

"For your trouble," I said, and gave the filthy scribe another gold piece, and fled from the tavern while he still was muttering dazed thanks.

I knew Metaxas would be proud of me. A little jealous, even—for in short order I had put together a lengthier family tree than his own. *His* went back only to the tenth century, mine (a little shakily) to the seventh. Of course, he had an annotated list of hundreds of ancestors, and I knew details of only a few dozen, but he had started years ahead of me.

I set my timer carefully and shunted back to December 27, 437. The street was dark and silent. I hurried into the inn. Less than three minutes had elapsed since my departure, even though I had spent eight hours down the line in 1175. My tourists slept soundly. All was well.

I was pleased with myself. By candlelight I sketched the details of the Ducas line on a scrap of old vellum. I wasn't really planning to *do* anything with the genealogy. I wasn't looking for ancestors to kill, like Capistrano, or ancestors to seduce, like Metaxas. I just wanted to gloat a little over the fact that my ancestors were Ducases. Some people don't have ancestors at all.

(To be concluded)

ONLY YESTERDAY

No false modesty, no cover-up pseudonyms. Your editor wrote this story because he had made his own trip into the past, via dusty photo-albums and nostalgic reflections, and he saw more than he could reach out and touch. If you could hop a time-machine into the past, who would you see? And what could you, would you, say? Don't be deceived. This is not a story about time-travel; it is a story about people.

TED WHITE

He was waiting for her when she stepped down from the trolley.

The grass was dry and dead under his feet, and the crisp air made his nose run. He pulled a tissue from the packet in his overcoat pocket, blew into it, wadded it, looked around at the straight lines of the tracks, the receding trolley, the brown fields, the little half-open waiting shed in which he stood—then self-consciously shoved the used tissue back in his pocket.

The overhead wire was still singing. The girl's step on the cinders as she started across the tracks was loud and crisp. She was the only one to get off. She gave him a quizzical glance, then turned diagonally to his left to the well-worn path that cut across the fields. In the distance wooded hills rose darkly; closer—less than a quarter of a mile away—were a cluster of white-painted frame houses. The path headed in their direction.

Snuffling, he started after her.

"Ah, miss?" he called.

She stopped and turned, facing him. She was carrying a leather bag, a briefcase really, with a shoulder strap. It bulged and it looked heavy. He fought down the giddy impulse to ask her if he could carry her books.

"Yes?"

"You're—ah, Donna Albright?"

She started to nod, then shook her head. "You're half right. I'm Donna Smith."

He felt like doing something violent, like smacking his head with the palm of his hand. God, he felt tense about this. Instead he mumbled something incomprehensible and then said, "Umm, yes. That's what I meant. Donna Smith, I mean. My mistake."

He looked young; younger than he was. He'd shaved off his beard and he looked eighteen. He felt nervous and ill at ease. His stomach was knotted and he could still taste breakfast. He wondered why in hell he was doing this. God, she was pretty.

"Okay, so I'm Donna Smith. Were you waiting for me?"

Her brown hair was long, and hung in tight curls from under her cloche hat. The hat looked stupid, he thought; they always had. Her eyes were dark, and an impish smile lurked behind her lips. She was a lot prettier than the old photographs. He tried to think of something to say. He'd planned lots of things: clever, witty things. They were all evaporated by the reality of the scene.

"Uh, I wonder if I might, uh, walk with you . . . ?" He felt himself flush. God, there it was: the school books gambit!

She laughed. "Okay. But I warn you—I have a pair of husky brothers at home." Her tone implied she didn't think they'd be necessary, though. He fell into step beside her; the path was a wide one. "But who are you, though?" she asked.

His fingers fidgeted with the tissues in his overcoat pocket. He'd worn that coat—the one he'd gotten from the Salvation Army—because it had seemed appropriate for the time. If he didn't take it off or open it, the clothes he had under it wouldn't matter. But now . . . well, what was he going to tell her? What *could* he tell her?

"Uh, I'm Bob," he said. The name felt clumsy on his lips, but he'd agreed not to use his real name. He remembered one of the lines he'd rehearsed. "I'm a friend of a friend, sorta . . ."

"Oh! Are you one of the guys Griff knows, down in Richmond?"

He started to deny it, then agreed.

"Have you been in the city? I mean, did you come out from Washington?"

"I was on an earlier trolley," he replied truthfully. The eight-mile trip had been quite an experience. The wooden-bodied car had swayed alarmingly from side to side as it took the long down-stretch onto private right-of-way outside Rosslyn, across the bridge from Georgetown. The grade-schoolers, laughing and shouting back and forth up and down the aisle, had just whooped a little louder when the car hit the bend and then the upgrade again, and he'd clawed the worn seat-back in front of him like the guard-bar on a roller-coaster. "I wanted to see the countryside," he added.

"This part of Virginia is very pretty in the fall," Donna said, "but you missed the best part. I mean, when the trees turn colors. That was a couple of weeks ago; it's been a short fall. It's getting cold so fast. I expect we'll have snow soon. You can kind of smell it, you know?"

He snuffled again. "My sinuses," he offered in explanation. He dug another tissue from his pocket. It was half-shredded; he'd been working it with his fingers. He pulled the cellophane packet and found a whole one. He blew on it. He glanced up to see Donna's large eyes staring at him, and he felt his face get hot again. Packets of pastel tissues—anachronistic? He hadn't thought.

The path dipped into a hollow, then crossed a stream gully on a wooden bridge. He felt very uncomfortable. The cold had started in his feet and worked well up his legs

while he'd waited for her there at the trolley stop. Now he was chilled all over, and walking hadn't warmed his feet; it had only deadened them.

"You certainly are the strange one," Donna said.

He laughed nervously. He sure was.

"Uh, tell me: what year are you in college? You go to American U., don't you?"

She laughed. "Sophomore. I had a room with a girl in town last year, but I couldn't keep it up. It's almost as easy to come home nights. Good old A.U. . . ." her voice trailed off almost dreamily. He realized he'd given her nothing, really, to say.

"Yeah, Griff told me about that," he said, trying to keep it going.

They reached the road. It was gravelled clay, tufts of frost-killed weeds growing here and there down the center. They skirted an ice-filmed puddle. He glanced to the west. The sun was a weak, washed-out red blob half-hidden in the tree-line. Getting dark.

She noticed his glance. "Be home soon. You'll come in? Hot chocolate, tea, coffee?"

He agreed, grateful at the thought of something warm to drink. Then panic hit him: face her parents, her brothers? *Could* he?

The houses were to the left, grouped along the road about two hundred yards from where the path came out. Mott's Corners. Old Man Mott had put them up for each of his children. He followed Donna to the right, following the road down a gentle slope. Donna kicked a rock that skittered along the worn track of the road and splashed into another puddle.

The sound of the car saved him from a final desperate attempt at conversation. He heard it before he saw it: a wheezing, rattling, four-banger with a muffler that had to be about shot. Then it appeared over the hill to their left, heading down a sideroad on a collision course with theirs. At first only its high square roof was visible over the tall tangled weeds of the field. The field was genced off with two strands of rusty barbed wire, but he couldn't see that they served much of a purpose.

"Hey, there's Jimmy!" Donna said. "It's my brother Jimmy!" She jumped up and down and waved her arm at the approaching car.

The car answered with a raucous honk and then, with a clatter of gravel, made the turn at the foot of the hill onto their road. It was bearing down on them so fast that he made a hasty jump into the weeds at the side of the road.

"Hey!" Donna shouted, and the car jolted to a stop in front of them. It was a Model T, black. The top was frayed and the side curtains flapped loosely. The driver was a freckled kid with a wide grin. He had to be at least three years underage for a license.

"Hiya, Donna! How'dya like it? I got her running again! Thought I'd come over and pick ya up. You're late. Who's this?"

Jimmy. James Smith. It was hard to believe.

"This is Bob. He's a friend of Griff's. He's come out for the evening. He's half-frozen, I think. I'm glad you came along." Donna introduced them, and Jimmy gave him a salute and waved them aboard.

The car had a nominal back seat,

but all that was left was an old orange crate. He squatted on it and peered over the cracked leather back of the front seat as Donna settled next to her brother and Jimmy ground the gears to begin a lurching crawl backwards.

They backed to the intersection, then turned up the short hill. The color had faded from the sky. The farmland had the brown tinge of sepia-tone photographs. The world seemed very thin then: two-dimensional, attic-dry and musty. But at the same time every pothole the car struck was another jolt to his cold-deadened body, the car had an overpowering gasoline smell that cut through even his clogged sinuses, and Donna's head was so close to his face as he leaned forward that he could feel the heat of her skin. Getting schizy?

The car topped the rise, then raced wildly down the slope and up a more gradual grade. Ahead, two windows warm glows in the blackness of its tar-paper exterior, stood the Smith house.

Jimmy swerved the car across the hard ruts, over the rough ground, and halted it with a screech from its mechanical brakes within inches of the footings for the new wing.

Tall oaks hung like black skeletons over the narrow two-storey house, a few tattered leaves still clinging to their branches. The house itself was only half-finished; he recognized that without Donna's quick remark, "Dad and the boys've been building the house in their spare time; it's still got some to go." There was a note of pride in her voice, but the porch was only a rude platform without a roof, the north

wing was just a line of trenches, and the siding wasn't on yet—thin strips of furring that followed the interior studs were all that held the tar-paper over the sub-frame walls. There was no yard in front. Behind and to one side was the chicken house and chicken yard. But the garage hadn't been built next to it yet, and a truck garden showed its empty furrows on the other side of the house. It was a rude place. When he climbed awkwardly down from the car, he almost tripped over an engine block. Jimmy apologized. "Chevy engine," he said. "Next spring, boy . . ."

Dad Smith was a big man; he looked more like a lantern-jawed Swede than a mathematician whose parents were from Liverpool. He had a full head of bushy brown hair, and his high forehead was still clear of liver-spots. He stuck out his bony hand and it was engulfing. "Friend of Griff's, huh?" Smith said, nodding. "How they treating Griff down there?"

"As well as you'd expect," he replied with a nervous laugh.

"I expect as long's you're here, you'll want to go up to the Ballards' for a chat?"

He shook his head, then improvised. "Actually, I don't know Griff that well . . . I mean, when I said I'd be out in this neck of the woods, he said to say hi to Donna, and . . . Well, I didn't expect to do more than, uh, just that. Just a 'Hi', and . . . well, I'm pushing my schedule a bit already, sir." Damn that Griff Ballard story, anyway! And damn Donna for going around so much with him, too. Of course, the Ballards and the Smiths were neigh-

bors, and when she'd suggested it, he'd picked up on Griff as a likely introduction, so . . .

"This is my mother, Bob."

Mrs. Smith was tiny standing next to her husband. She had come from the doorway that led to the kitchen, wiping her hands slowly and carefully on her apron. When she spoke, it was with a touch of the midwest—Iowa, he remembered—as she welcomed him and asked what he'd like to drink.

Soon he was settled in a comfortable chair, a mug of hot chocolate in his hand. A potbellied iron stove in the corner radiated a warm glow into the cosy room, and the smell of woodsmoke and occasional crackling of the burning logs was strangely nostalgia-evoking. He felt a warming tingle return to his toes.

"Where's Paul?" Donna asked, once she had him out of his coat and settled with the chocolate.

"Upstairs," Mr. Smith said, eyes twinkling. "Pitching pennies."

"Oh, Dad! Not again! Don't you have enough statistics by now?"

"I'll run up and get him," Jimmy volunteered.

So far no one had said anything about his clothes. "Pitching pennies?" he asked.

"Dad's a statistician—he's with the Bureau of Standards, in Washington," Donna said. She let the smile quirk up the corners of her mouth. It seemed to include him in their private joke; it made her delicately impish. "He's always got us doing things like that."

A clumping on the stairs heralded Paul, Jimmy right behind him.

"How goes it?" Mr. Smith asked.

"Cold," replied Paul, laconically. You could see he took after his father—the same big frame, bushy hair, lumberjack look, only thinner, younger. *He hasn't changed much.* "The longest run was thirteen heads."

"You have the register open?" his father asked. There was an opening in the ceiling over the stove for hot air to move into the upstairs rooms.

"I lose too many pennies that way." Paul's expression didn't change.

"Paul, this is Bob. He's a—a friend of Griff's," Donna said.

He pulled himself up out of the chair and offered his hand to Paul. Paul gave it a negligent shake, and him a vague nod. He seemed not at all interested in the boyfriends of his young sister.

"You make chocolate?" Paul asked. "I could use some; keep my hands warm, anyway."

Donna frowned, but went out to the kitchen.

He felt awkward, standing like that, so he returned to his seat with a strange guilty little knot tight in his stomach. *He had no business here.*

When Donna returned with another steaming mug, a callico cat followed her out. The cat stalked immediately over to him and sniffed at his shoes. He smiled, leaned over and held out his hand. The cat gave one brief sniff, then turned tail and retreated to the kitchen.

"Don't mind Paul," Jimmy said, inclining his head toward the stairs. Above a door shut. "He's that way with everybody. He's going for his doctorate next spring."

"Mathematics?" he asked, surprised.

"English," Jimmy replied.

"Jimmy," Mr. Smith said, rising from his rocker. "Time for the chores." He led the way to the door, lifting down a tent of an old coat from the peg to the right of the door. A moment later, the front door slammed shut and the stove chucked to itself in the fresh onslaught of cold air.

They were alone then, the two of them, by themselves in the sudden silence of the room. From the kitchen came the clang of a cast-iron skillet on the heavy metal top of the old wood-burning kitchen stove. Above them, floorboards creaked at odd moments.

She was staring at him. Again he asked himself, *What am I doing in this place?* But he made no move to get up.

Nervously fingering his narrow lapel, he broke the silence, saying, "I'd like to tell you some things . . . Totally outrageous things. You have to promise me just one thing first."

"What's that?" Her voice was soft. Their voices would not carry beyond the room.

"That you won't believe a word of it." That was weaselling, and he knew it. He wasn't supposed to be doing this. *This was forbidden.*

She giggled, and in that moment he was starkly aware of her youth. "Okay," she said. "Shoot."

What was he supposed to be? Could he just enter her life like this and leave it again, without telling her *any* of the truth? "I'm going to try to tell your fortune," he said, lying. It wouldn't be hers.

"You want to see my palm?"

He laughed. "Not that sort of fortune. I am going to close my eyes and see your aura, your fourth-dimensional aura. I am going to follow it into the future and tell you what I see for you there . . ." He squeezed shut his eyes; they felt dry and stinging. He paused. He felt as though his voice might break.

"Well?" She leaned forward eagerly. "What do you see?"

"I see you meeting a tall man with black hair," he said. "You're going to marry him."

She laughed. "I thought you knew Griff," she said. "He's short and blond."

He nodded. "That's true . . . I—I see great metal airliners with wings as big as this house, airplanes that can carry hundreds of people, scores of cars or trucks. They're flying so high overhead that the sound they make follows across the sky far behind them, they're so fast and far away. I see, I see great rockets, tall as high buildings, poised like bullets to shoot out into space and to the moon . . .

"I see sleek, low automobiles built of plastic and shimmering with iridescent colors, streaking along vast highways at speeds over a hundred miles an hour. I see . . . radios the size of cigarette packages . . . Phono—uh, gramophones that play hour-long records . . . Television sets that receive wireless broadcasts of color pictures on their own screens . . ."

She laughed again. "Oh, I've seen all those! The *Times-Herald* Sunday supplements are full of that sort of stuff."

She shouldn't have laughed.

"I see war," he said. His voice tore from his throat, and his expression was tight and twisted. "War, beyond any war you've dreamed. Bombs—so many bombs exploding over cities that the very air itself catches fire. And the airplanes that carry the bombs—so many hundreds of them that they blacken the sky. I see whole countries—continents, even—devastated, laid waste.

"A war to end all wars," he went on bitterly. "But more wars follow, more boys die, and the bombs get bigger, until a single bomb can wipe out a city the size of New York.

"I see populations growing unchecked, squalid slums and mass poverty and starvation, creeping over the world. I see death, and destruction—hatreds that tear this country apart by its roots. I see our cities collapsing in riots, mobs thronging the streets looting and killing, and the soldiers coming out in tanks and firing their guns at their countrymen.

"I see napalm washing liquid fire over a mother who sits in a gutter holding her dead baby—"

"Stop!"

He opened his eyes. She was staring at him, shocked, wide-eyed. Her cheeks glistened.

"Why? Why are you saying all these things.

"I—I'm sorry," he said. "I shouldn't have." His voice shook. "I told you, you weren't to believe me."

"I don't. Maybe we're in a Great Depression, like they say, but that's no reason to talk like *that*."

You're right," he said. She was

right. He'd been warned. "It was a bum idea. Forget it."

"You made it all up." It wasn't quite a statement.

He nodded. "Yes," he said, "yes, I made it all up. I guess I get depressed sometimes. Things—like the Hoovervilles, you know." His mug was empty and cold. He got up. "I better go now."

She looked up at him "You're very strange," she said.

You should only know.

"Thanks for the hospitality," he said. "Thank your mother for the hot chocolate, please." He pulled on his overcoat. "Say goodbye for me to Jimmy, Paul . . ."

"Bob—" She put her hands on his and looked up at him. He couldn't keep his eyes from hers. "I . . . You *were* making it all up?"

He felt disoriented and distant. He seemed to be staring down a long tunnel into her eyes, while somewhere else, in another place, her hands were warm and soft and alive on his.

"I'll close my eyes once more," he said. "Ahh . . . I see you, married, happy, in a sunlit yard beside a red brick house. It's close by here; your father will give you the land to build on." Only her hands held him from swaying in the darkness that engulfed him. "I see no wars, only sunshine, for you," he said. It was the truth—as far as it went. He owed her at least that much.

"I believe you," she said.

The stars were cold and hard and bright, and the frosty air cut his throat. Underfoot, frozen grass

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HUE AND CRY

Bob Shaw's "Light of Other Days" is already—only three years after its publication—a classic. More recently, he has turned to books, with the publication of The Two-Timers as an Ace Special, and two earlier novels, Night Walk and The Shadow of Heaven, scheduled for publication this year by Avon. Here, in a lighter mood, he poses and solves a colorful problem . . .

BOB SHAW

Turbon stared fixedly at the mouth of the cave where the two-legged food creature was trapped. He had an uneasy feeling that something was beginning to go wrong with his plan, but was unable to decide what it could be.

His wife stirred impatiently, ripples of green morning sunlight running like water along her powerful body. "I still think we should send in a bunch of females," she said. "If the food creature does kill a couple of them it will be so much the better. You and I can have the food creature and the others can have the dead females."

Turbon suppressed a sarcastic reply. He had spent years building up his public image of the imperturbable Philosopher King, but there were times when Cadesk annoyed him so much he almost threw it all to the winds. For perhaps the thousandth time he wished fervently he had been born a female, in which case he would have destroyed Cadesk with one blow and—the ultimate insult—refused to eat her afterwards.

"Be calm, dearest. You mustn't forget that I have been listening to these creatures' radio transmissions for years while—I might point out—others were immersed in brutish pleasures. I know them. There will be about twenty others in the space ship . . ."

"The what?"

"The space ship."

"You mean the shell?"

"Yes, dearest, I mean the shell; but we must learn to think of it as something more than a food container—it is a machine which can fly from star to star, not just a large exoskeleton. As long as the trapped food creature is alive the others will not leave here. I expect them to emerge from the space ship at any moment and try to retrieve their companion—then, thanks to my wisdom, we will have twenty to share among us. I shall not be greedy, of course, perhaps two or three . . ."

"Stop rambling," Cadesk interrupted coarsely. "I can't listen to you and that stupid shouting at the same time."

Turbon glanced up to where six

males were crouched before the cave mouth emitting, in obedience to his orders, blasts of radio waves from their speech centres each time the food creature within tried to communicate with the space ship from which it had strayed. He wondered if he should try to explain something of what he had learned about the strangers who walked on only two legs.

Years previously, when he had first heard their voices filtering down from the sky, Turbon had believed he was listening to beings like himself who by virtue of strong metallic traces in their nervous systems were able to communicate by radio emission. It had been a long time before he realised his imagined giants who could shout from star to star were, in reality, only creatures who spoke with sound waves but employed radio to extend their range. The next big step forward had been the discovery that the creatures also transmitted pictures. After a year of intense mental effort and discipline—during which Cadesk had continually threatened to leave him because of the apparent loss of his sexual powers—he had learned to unscramble the signals and actually see the pictures from the sky. Once this breakthrough had been made Turbon got to know a lot about the unfamiliar creatures and had learned their language.

"If the shouting goes on much longer," Cadesk said petulantly, "I won't be able to eat."

Turbon ignored this comment, partly because it was such a blatant lie but mainly because he had realised what was going wrong. The creature had previously been making sporadic attempts to use its radio transmitter, but for the last few seconds the attempts had been coming very close together.

The massed shouts from the six males, faithfully superimposing themselves on the signals from the cave, were forming a pattern of long and short bursts of radio noise.

He tugged Cadesk's tail in panic. "Get up near the cave at once and tell the males to shout continuously. No more of this starting and stopping. The food creature is using them to send its message." Cadesk gave him an exasperated glance, but she slid obediently away through the yellow undergrowth. At an early stage Turbon had learned the code which the sky creatures used for continuous wave transmissions and, with a sinking sensation, he applied it to the emergent pattern.

"... able to study these beasts for some time without their knowledge. The main thing to remember when you come for me is that only the females can kill. If you pick them off first the males will run for cover. They are easy to tell apart. In fact you cannot go wrong in identifying male and female because . . ." The remainder of the message was drowned out as the six males, having been reached by Cadesk, swung over to producing an uninterrupted blast of noise. Turbon twitched with relief.

They held a meeting of the Elder Council right away. "That's it then," Cadesk said briskly when told the situation. "It would be stupid to try an attack now that the food creatures have our secret. I vote we rush the cave now and at least get *something*. I must say, also, that the creature wasn't long in deciding who matters and who doesn't around here." She flexed her great killer's muscles and lay down. The other five members of the Council, being male, registered

as much protest as they dared but the general feeling of the meeting was that Cadesk had scored a definite point.

Turbon stepped into the breach quickly, aware that this was an important chance to demonstrate the superiority of mind over muscle. "It is true," he announced, "the food creatures are aware that our females invariably carry out the . . . less pleasant tasks associated with the perpetuation of our species, but . . ."

"Don't be too modest," Cadesk interrupted. "One of these days you'll learn how to talk 'em to death."

" . . . but, important as this piece of information undoubtedly is, it of little value to anyone encountering us for the first time. The differences in physiognomy, musculature, pigmentation, etc, which enable us to distinguish male from female so readily are meaningless without prior knowledge. In short, the food creatures can't tell one of our males from one of our females—so, in effect, nothing has changed."

Cadesk looked impressed. "He's right, you know. Perhaps we ought to keep to the original plan, but I hope something happens soon. I can almost smell them from here." She smacked her lips and drooled slightly in a way which Turbon, in spite of himself, found captivating.

In the afternoon of the following day something did happen. A door on the spaceship swung open and fourteen of the two-legged food creatures, carrying weapons, set out across the mile of jungle which lay between their ship and the cave.

The plan was immediately put into action. It was not a highly developed scheme because the Trelgans, as the dominant life form on a world of

primitive jungle, were in the habit of simply running headlong at anything which moved and then eating it. But for Turbon's advice about weapons they would have done the same thing with the new arrivals from the sky. Instead they had devised what they felt was a subtle little manoeuvre—the idea being to hide behind trees until the strangers were in their midst and *then* run headlong and eat them.

When the big moment arrived the food creatures made it easy by following a dead straight line to the cave, moving slowly through the ochre vegetation, weapons at the ready, red uniforms catching the sun. Turbon and Cadesk had mustered all their forces for the attack—two dozen females and four times as many males. They even had time to find a good vantage point half way up a huge tree overlooking the scene of the ambush, which was a flat piece of ground quite close to the cave.

"You're certain nothing can go wrong?" The wait was straining Cadesk's naturally minute store of patience.

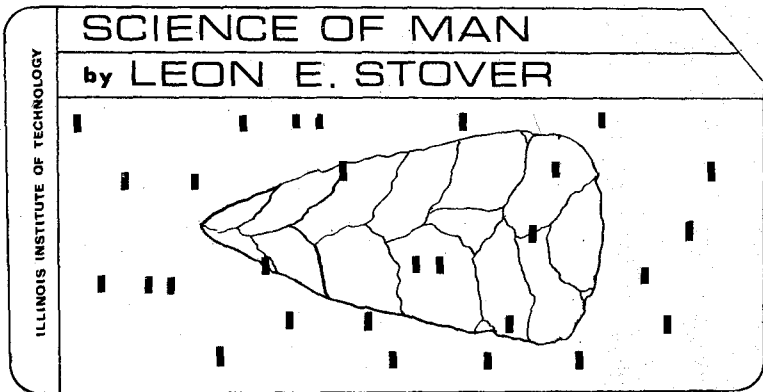
"Of course, dearest," Turbon replied peacefully. "The food creature told the others they would have no trouble identifying our females, but he didn't get the chance to say how. Perhaps, being mammals, they are assuming we are too, and will be looking for creatures with great lactic glands thumping about all over the place." He laughed at the idea and then fell silent as the leaders of the little column of food creatures came into view at the far edge of the clearing.

It seemed to take an eternity for the slow-moving file to reach the center, but they finally made it and Turbon gave the signal to attack.

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HUE AND CRY

85



THE PENDANT SPECTATOR

Coasting toward the moon, the astronauts of Apollo 8 turned their telephoto lens toward the Earth and beamed home a TV picture of our planet as a globe isolated against infinity. Col. Frank Borman commented, "You're looking at yourselves from 180,000 miles out in space."

The idea of viewing our own planetary landscape by hanging above it at a great distance was cultivated long before it became a fact. Samuel Johnson evoked the philosophical wonders of a "pendant spectator" in *Rasselas*, a novel published in 1759.

You, Sir, whose curiosity is so extensive, will easily conceive with what pleasure a philosopher, furnished with wings, and hovering in the sky, would see the earth, and all its inhabitants, rolling beneath him, and presenting to him successively, by its diurnal motion, all the coun-

tries within the same parallel. How must it amuse the pendant spectator to see the moving scene of land and ocean, cities and deserts! To survey with equal security the marts of trade, and the fields of battle; mountains infested with barbarians, and fruitful regions gladdened by plenty, and lulled by peace! How easily shall we then trace the Nile through all his passage; pass over to distant regions, and examine the face of nature from one extremity of the earth to the other! (from chap. VI.)

The cosmic viewpoint of the pendant spectator, however, does more than satisfy curiosity. In our day it has practical importance. The realization of the cosmic viewpoint by the astronauts of Apollo 8 comes at a time when it is needed. Indeed, the very same

technological virtuosity which made the Apollo flight possible created the problems which can be solved only from the viewpoint of a pendant spectator. Science and technology have created global problems that call for global solutions. The United States Department of the Interior entitled its 1968 yearbook, *Man . . . An Endangered Species?* La-Mont Coge, Professor of Ecology at Cornell University, in the same year addressed the American Association for the Advancement of Science with a paper entitled, *Can The World Be Saved?*

The vision of humanity vulnerable to self-made catastrophe used to belong only to the imagination of science fiction. Now the same vision is acceptable to practical men of affairs. Barbara Ward, the noted British economist, recently wrote that

In the last few decades, mankind has been overcome by the most fateful change in its entire history. Modern science and technology have created so close a network of communication, transport, economic interdependence—and potential nuclear destruction—that planet earth, on its journey through infinity, has acquired the intimacy, the fellowship, and the vulnerability of a spaceship.

She wrote this in the introduction to a book entitled, *Spaceship Earth* (1966).

The idea of planet Earth as a spaceship whose passengers must cooperate in the management of their own survival is strengthened by the mission of Apollo 8. Col. Borman, with his telecast from 180,000 miles out in space, made everybody who watched a pen-

dant spectator. One who reflected on the meaning of that fantastic coign of observation was the poet Archibald MacLeish, who wrote that we all could now see

ourselves as riders on the Earth together on that bright loveliness in the eternal cold—brothers who know now they are truly brothers.

Sorry to say, this lovely bit of humanistic wisdom is quite out of place. The appeal to brotherhood, morality or conscience has not worked in the past under the guidance of religious teachers, and it will not work in the future under the impact of Col. Borman's telecast. Cooperation is needed on a global scale to prevent a world wreck, but this cooperation will not come about by an outdated call to share in motivations of responsibility for the common good. There is only one approach more dangerous than the idealistic one, and that is the one advocated by the so-called social engineers. Both, actually, come down to the same thing. Both humanists and social engineers want to solve human problems the same way, by *changing human behavior*. The idealist-humanist preaches that man must *be good*, must change his motives for the betterment of all men. The social engineer argues that social structure must be planned in such a way that men *cannot behave badly* toward each other. Social engineering is a case of misplaced scientific rationality, and it leads to strong-arm government. For centuries the great religions and famous ethical teaching have exerted control over human behavior by appealing to guilt. That is, if you do harm to your fellow humans or to the social order, you are sup-

posed to feel badly about it and have a bad conscience. Feeling guilty is a form of sickness. The clinical name for it is schizophrenia.

The idea of Spaceship Earth is nonetheless important in averting a world wreck. It is necessary to know that we the passengers do indeed share in a closed ecology. Medicine after Pasteur has provided death control so effective, in the absence of birth control, that the human population doubled by the 1930s to a rapidly achieved high of two billion—it took almost three million years from the foraging apemen, through the first hunters of our own species, on to the Neolithic, urban and industrial revolutions to build up the first billion—and we can expect a tripling by the end of the century for six billion. The combustion of fossil fuels within the last fifty years has released more carbon dioxide into the air than plant life can absorb; what is more, photosynthesis is being inhibited in plankton and diatoms of the oceans. The amount of oxygen in the atmosphere is decreasing and will continue to decrease to the level of universal asphyxiation unless limits to combustion are realized. The dangers of unlimited population growth is no less certain. Large scale famine in the pre-industrial world is predicted for the 1970s. The world is a big place and man is small, but he is capable of outrunning the physical limits of the world's carrying capacity. Before that time, however, the political problems of economic competition could lead to nuclear war. Cooperation is indeed required to solve these problems, but not the kind of moralistic cooperation that is involved in the call to shared motivations.

That the religious, ethical or humanistic appeal to conscious will not work as a device in policing world pollution, world population or world peace is evident at the local level. Factories A, B, C, D, and so on, are located in every city along the river. The accumulated result down river is increased cost in treating water for city use. Each factory gains the benefit of not having to pay for any of this cost, which is divided among all the cities at public expense. If the federal government were to appeal to each industrialist that he would be guilty of passing on the cost of water treatment to others, some would respond in good conscience as responsible citizens and pay out the extra expense for recycling their water or otherwise purifying their wastes before returning them to the river. Others of them would not. So A and B, let us say, respond in good faith, and C and D do not.

There always have been people who can be persuaded to make sacrifices on moral grounds, and those who cannot be so persuaded. C and D win a competitive advantage by not adding the cost of water treatment to their manufacturing expenses. Meanwhile, A and B will recognize that they were fools because their example of good citizenship was not universally imitated but rather was taken by others as an opportunity to win economic advantage. For A and B it is be damned if you do pollute (feel guilty) and damned if you don't pollute (feel foolish in the eyes of those who do.)

The industrialists in this situation are like the herdsmen who pasture their cattle on an enclosed commons. Each cattle owner wins a positive advantage for each and every head he

puts on the commons. If too many cattle are grazed on the pasture, however, there will not be enough grass to feed all the cattle adequately, or erosion may set in and ruin the resource for everybody. Any herdsman can understand overgrazing. But each has his own cattle to care for and profit by, and the disadvantages of overgrazing can—for a time, before catastrophe overtakes everybody—be distributed among all owners. Each can visualize the positive benefits of adding just one more head for himself more clearly than he can visualize the gradual fractional negative results in gradual deterioration of the pasture. No appeal to morality in the name of common good can save the situation. Those herdsmen who withhold additional self-advantage suffer loss of self-esteem in their being suckered into an economic loss by those less moralistic than themselves.

The impersonal ecological morality of the commons, dictated by natural laws, cannot be entrusted to self-interested individuals with sanctions of guilt and conscience. This is why science and education will have their day in the future, for the good of our planetary commons, at the expense of traditional religious, ethical and liberal appeals to the conscience of the choice-making individual. Science will inform us of the natural limits of human choice—when we have added too many head of cattle for the pasture to sustain—and education will teach us the whys and necessities of accepting legal coercion against unrestricted choice.

The humanistic tradition associates coercion with strong-arm government. This is not necessarily the case. People agree to accept coercion everytime they

use a parking meter. Parking space is limited in the city, especially in the downtown business section. There are more people driving downtown to shop than there are parking spaces for them all at one time. The parking meter is a way of measuring off a limited amount of time for each person, with the penalty of a parking ticket for those who overstay, allowing for a high turnover of customers—to the benefit of both the business section and to the shoppers seeking access to the downtown area. Nearly everybody who uses a parking meter understands this. In accepting a time limit or even the prospect of a parking ticket, they have mutually agreed to accept coercion as mediated by the police. This system works. The appeal to guilt—please don't park too long; give your fellow citizen a chance to park—won't work.

Temperate use of parking space downtown, temperate use of pasture in a commons, temperate use of water and air for the dissipation of wastes, temperate breeding of children, cannot be elicited in the name of humanity, citizenship, fellowship, planetary brotherhood, species unity or any other category of common good, even if the outcome is survival of mankind. The only thing that works here is coercion. But coercion only works when people understand why they have agreed to accept penalties for a violation. People accept the tyranny of the parking meter because they are educated in the practical good that the parking meter distributes to self and others. Education in the necessities of coercion in other spheres of life will be forthcoming.

Naturally, custodians of the liberal-humanistic tradition of thought will

resist this trend in education every inch of the way. They are not likely to see the analogy in these other spheres with the parking situation. To give up automobiles, to give up unlimited breeding of children—that's unjust! So what if in the future the rate of population growth in the world must reduce to zero? So what if the world level of CO₂ must be reduced? My car and my children are the business of my choice. But a lot of private individual choices—to own or not to own a car, to have a third or fourth child—add up to big social and ecological effects. And these effects can be worse than injustice.

Science teaches us that freedom is the recognition of necessity—necessities dictated by the limits of the physical world we live in. There is no talk of injustice in the culture of science. That belongs to the culture of humanism, in which freedom is the right to express self and make choices and demand justice. But as man begins to move up against some of the physical and ecological limitations of the world, worse things than injustice and violation of rights are in store for us—the end of the world, for example. C. P. Snow has written about "the two cultures" of science and humanism as if the two differed only in content—Boyle's Law on the one hand, and Shakespeare on the other: A man had only to be literate in both to reconcile the two cultures. But perhaps the two are rather more irreconcilable than that if one penetrates to the fundamental difference between them on the philosophy of freedom: freedom to do what we *can* do vs freedom to do what we *want* to do. It would appear that science must conflict with the human-

istic tradition as science—and education in science—takes an ever larger part in the solution of global problems.

Science and education—these are the means by which global cooperation will be won in managing survival for the passengers aboard Spaceship Earth. Those problems are, mainly, the competition by the two superpowers for power production, the problem of pollution, and the problem of population control. The humanistic bias in seeking for solution to these world problems is to look for a world government to evolve out of the United Nations, at present limited to international cooperation only in making high sounding declarations about human rights. A world government would convert these words into policy. Apart from the U.N.'s uncritical philosophy of freedom—for example, the declaration that family size is the business of each family and of nobody else—world government returns the problem to social engineering once again. The Wellsian vision of a world state is still with us. This vision allows that the rational procedures of science which lie behind material progress may be extended to arranging the social order in a rational manner—a dangerous fallacy. If anthropology has nothing else to say, it is that if man designs a humane technology and educates himself properly in it, social structure will take care of itself.

Indeed, there is no reason to wait for the onset of a world state to take care of world problems when there already exists an institution that long has been unavoidably international in cooperation, and that is science. The mission of Apollo 8 around the moon is compared with the voyage of Colum-

bus to the New World. Well, Columbus studied at the Academy of Sagres, founded in 1419 by Prince Henry of Portugal. The Academy was headed by a Jew from Majorca, and included Muslims and Christians on the staff. These scholars worked together as a research team on all aspects of knowledge relating to deep water navigation and marine architecture. Columbus got his training there, coasting Africa, before he set out for the uncharted deeps to the west. The scientific knowledge relating to space flight—mathematics, celestial navigation, physics, rocketry—is no less international in scope. Science is not only international in the basis of its knowledge, it is international in the traveling of scientists from one country to another to attend meetings or to take up posts as visiting research fellows or professors. This is not to mention the fact that scientific libraries around the world are stocked with books, journals and autographed reprints from everywhere else. The scientists of the world share in a worldwide pool of knowledge. And these men are more and more serving as advisors to governments for whom policy decisions have become too complex to be made without scientific assessment of many of the factors involved. And one piece of advice they all are giving to their governments is: extend science education.

The global problems of power production, pollution and population will be solved as scientists persuade their governments to accept advice that will be accepted as education in science increases.

Here are some of the things these world scientists are certain to propose sooner or later. Take the question of

power production. The chief problem of rivalry between the two superpowers is that for the United States and the U.S.S.R. to sustain their national cultures, they must look for energy sources beyond their national boundaries. And this problem will grow for all nations, emphasizing the fact that all countries must draw upon the world environment as part of their own local ecologies. There are three sources of energy: fossil fuels, atomic energy, and solar radiation. Fossil fuels are finite, and the end can be calculated. But even before coal and oil reserves of the world are exhausted, power generation with combustible fuels will have produced intolerably bad effects on the human environment. The same goes for atomic energy, with its thermal pollution. That leaves solar energy, which is inexhaustible, non-polluting, and can be captured without crossing national boundaries. The most practical means of capturing solar energy, in fact, would be international cooperation, allowing the energy requirements of all states to be drawn from a joint source. One way that has been proposed to do this is by orbiting geostationary satellites about 6 km in diameter. Their photovoltaic devices would transmit tight microwave beams in the 10-centimeter wavelength to Earth receiving stations. Or, power could be transmitted by direct wire, given a load-bearing "sky-hook" cable at least 36,000 km long, attached to the Earth at the bottom and placed in stationary orbit at the other. This is possible with a cable weighing 1 g/meter and withstanding a tension of 1.5 to 2 tons for a total mass of 900 tons. Such projects in cooperative energy production from solar radiation

(Continued on page 114)

THE POISON PEN

By MILTON LESSER

Perhaps, after finishing this story, you'll make the remark that "it couldn't happen here!"

Well, all we can say is that you may have the right answer and that's fine. But if you should be the type to read the morning Tribune carefully, you may learn that it not only could happen—but actually has!

18 March 1997

THERE'S dancing in the streets today! I'm so excited, I can hardly write these words, but we have a diary reading in our block at 2200 hours tonight, so I have to get something down. The Masters went as suddenly as they came. We don't know where they came from nor why they held the Earth for thirty years. We don't know yet why they decided to leave. Perhaps we'll never know, but does it matter? We're free. First reaction of everyone I met: sheer joy. The cold wind and driving rain doesn't stop them—they're dancing. But underneath it all, you can almost smell the fear and uncertainty on the air. I'm glad I was never a co-operationist.

It's time for the diary reading. More later.

2400 hours—The usual stuff at the diary reading. Mrs. Campbell, though, is thinking of divorce because her husband was a Co-op. You should have seen his face—obviously, it was the first he heard about it. Jack Tisdall seduced the Mallory girl two nights ago. Poor kid was blushing to beat the band, but she should have known it would come out at the reading. I'll bet every eligible bachelor—and some who are not—will try to date her. Mrs. Mallory practically dragged her from the reading room over at the public school. A pretty pink behind is going to be made pinker tonight, yes sir. Sam Faloney's business isn't doing too well.



Moral: keep a diary and the pen you use may be your suicide weapon!

Dr. Trillis caused the most comment, though. They just don't make people like Dr. Trillis anymore; but then, he was a mature adult before the Masters got here. The professor said there's going to be trouble because we're all exhibitionists. That was his word, exhibitionists. I'd like to look it up some time in some of his own books. From the cradle, he said, the Masters made us compulsive exhibitionists, and the older generation either had to go along with it or feel left out. Down to the smallest block in the smallest town the Masters could tell what was going on that way, he said. Then he dropped his bombshell.

We ought to get rid of diaries and diary reading. We ought to teach our children to keep secrets and we can start by not rewarding them for tattling. It might even be a good idea (said Dr. Trillis) to wear clothing in the summer time. I can't see the connection, but he claims it's part of the same exhibitionism. I don't claim to understand him more than anyone else did, but when Dr. Trillis speaks, I'll at least give him the courtesy of listening.

20 March

Nuts! I called Diane Mal-

lory for a date tonight and found myself number fifteen on a waiting list a mile long. That lucky stiff, Jack Tisdall. Diane was wearing lace paint to match her dark hair and a shimmering breast veil. Mrs. Mallory was there behind her, scowling at me throughout the conversation and scribbling busily in her diary. Already you can see the kind of stuff we'll have to put up with, thanks to Jack Tisdall. Diane's the prettiest girl on the block and this was the first time I ever saw her wearing the veil indoors.

21 March

Mrs. Campbell won't have to get her divorce after all. We had a near-lynching on the block today.

I was on my way to work this morning, when I saw a crowd near the subway entrance. Somehow you can tell when a crowd looks ugly, like the time when Bertie Schultz refused to read from his diary last year and everyone wanted to take a swat at him till he changed his mind.

Anyway, I started pushing my way through because I was going to be late, since I'd already missed the 7:48 for Manhattan.

"Watch out, Johnny Cooper!" someone cried. "You're

in the way. I can't see what's going on."

Probably, it had started with Mrs. Campbell hen-pecking her husband about how he'd been a Co-op with the Masters. He kept on saying he'd discuss it later and was going to be late and would she please let him catch his train. He's a little guy with thick glasses and bewildered-looking eyes and seemed more surprised than anyone when George Fuller from down on the corner poked an umbrella in his ribs and said, "Let the wife talk."

Mr. Campbell tried to push his way through to the subway stairs, but George Fuller stood in his way, using the umbrella almost like a sword. A couple of youngsters started pushing Mr. Campbell from behind and yelling, "Co-op, dirty Co-op," and it looked like the little guy might fall down the stairs, only George Fuller was in the way with his umbrella.

"We didn't know they'd leave," he wailed. "None of you liked them, I heard it at the diary readings. Please, I'll be late."

Then George Fuller leered at him and said, "Go ahead, Co-op. Catch your train"—and stepped out of the way. The kids shoved again, and

poor Mr. Campbell went tumbling down the stairs. Mrs. Campbell made a quick notation in her diary—and plenty of other people were doing some furious writing too—then ran downstairs after him, still nagging.

The crowd followed and surrounded Mr. Campbell at the bottom of the stairs, taunting him. Every time he tried to get up and brush off his torn overcoat, someone would shove him down again. There was a lot of ugly talk and a couple of express trains flashed by while the kids who'd done the pushing started to kick Mr. Campbell.

"None of you liked them," he cried again. "Neither did I. It's in my diary. You can see it."

Someone said, "But we weren't co-operationists."

"It's in my diary." More kicking. "Stop. It hurts." His lips were swollen, his nose was leaking blood.

He seemed outraged that they wouldn't believe what was in his diary. It was a point and I was beginning to wonder what Dr. Trillis would make of it, but also wishing they'd leave Mr. Campbell alone. Then the professor came to catch his own train to where he teaches at Columbia University. He's got a

quick mind to go with his scholarly looks, that Dr. Trillis. He began a long harangue about how we should all work together after the Masters had gone, and let bygones be bygones and how, if it was in Mr. Campbell's diary that he didn't like the Masters, it must have been true, even if he had been a Co-op. Well, Dr. Trillis got the crowd to feeling sheepish, even George Fuller. Me and Jack Tisdall had to manhandle the two kids who were doing the kicking, though.

I told Dr. Trillis I'd foot the bill for his favorite dinner tonight, baked stuffed ham, if he'd answer some questions. He said "yes" fast. I guess professors are underpaid.

Incidentally, the reason Mrs. Campbell doesn't have to get a divorce after all is because her husband is leaving town, and under the old Master laws where labor had to be relocated and such, an annulment is automatic.

2200 hours—Dr. Trillis was quite willing to answer any question I asked him. Only trouble was, each answer led to half a dozen more questions. But the biggest surprise of all came right at the beginning of the meal.

"We'd better not leave here

together, Johnny," Dr. Trillis said. "I broke up the mob. You helped. There's talk about some people being too sympathetic to the Masters—us included."

"But that's crazy. We just stopped them from maybe killing him, that's all."

Dr. Trillis shrugged and washed down some ham with beer. "In one way, it's a good sign. They're not taking for granted everything they hear on reading night. Otherwise, it's all bad."

"Where will it lead to?" I asked him.

"Hard to say, Johnny. You see, the Masters could keep tabs on all the people by means of our diaries. It's a form of exhibitionism, which is why all forms of exhibitionism have been not only condoned and approved, but encouraged. But now the Masters have departed."

"Where'd they go?" I asked. "And why?"

"We don't even know where they came from or why—except that they were peeping Toms of a sort. They're on the way home now, with whatever information they wanted. Their home may be one of the familiar stars in a constellation we know; it may be a star we've never seen, not even with the biggest tele-

scope. Some day, I like to think, we'll go out there looking for them. But we've got to take into consideration first things first."

I said I didn't understand.

"Well, some people are more naive than others. There will be some who suddenly realize we'll have to put an end to exhibitionism—"

"You mean, like you?"

"—and others who will realize that exhibitionism and diaries are on the way out but right now can still make mighty potent weapons. It's these we'll have to look out for, Johnny. If they're unscrupulous, they can turn the diaries to their own advantage. Remember, we believe everything we see in them. If it was written in your diary, for example, that you were thinking of committing suicide and then someone murdered you—chances are he'd never be looked for, let alone found."

"But I don't want to kill myself!"

"You're taking me too literally. Before I came here tonight, my diary was stolen. I think I can tell you this, Johnny: I'm afraid. I think that diary is going to turn up some day with things in it I never wrote. That's why I think we'd better not be seen

together. It's you I'm thinking of."

There was more talk and more food, then I paid the bill with nearly half a week's wages and went home. I had the strange feeling I was being followed, but every time I turned around, the street seemed dark and deserted.

4 April

Tonight's my date with Diane Mallory. Zowie!

5 April

I don't care if Jack Tisdall teases me and says she told him the same things or not, but here are some of the things Diane told me. I'm more of a gentleman than the other guys on the block. I dance better. She likes the feel of my hand on her shoulder. She was hoping I'd do more than just kiss her goodnight on our first date. It might be weeks before she could see me again. I smell of leather and pipe smoke—so like a man, she said. She was delighted to have a nightcap in my apartment. Her mother was up to all hours in her place, anyway. (She was wearing only the painted lace this time, under her evening wrap.)

The hell with Jack Tisdall. Let him snicker if he can

when he reads this. I don't have to envy him any more over Diane Mallory, not one little bit.

Incidentally, I'm writing this in a brand new diary because I must have misplaced the old one. Looked everywhere, but can't seem to find it. Well, it'll turn up one of these days.

7 April

I'm getting worried. I looked all over for my old diary, but can't find it anywhere. It's not in the apartment, that's for sure. It's not anyplace in the neighborhood I might have been. It's not in my office. Every time I think of what Dr. Trillis said, I get scared. Maybe someone will be able to give me information about it at reading night the day after tomorrow.

9 April

Just got back from the diary reading—and what news! Dr. Trillis didn't show up, which is bad enough—but they found *his* diary. I don't know what to believe.

Here are some excerpts which I took down word for word:

"The Masters are a power for good, not evil. We're too backward a race to recognize this fact, and it wouldn't sur-

prise me if one of these days they turned their backs in disgust and let us stew in our own juice. That would be a black day for humanity." (That doesn't sound like Dr. Trillis at all.)

"The only thing bad about being a co-operationist is you can't tell the people. It's the one thing you can keep secret, or so the Masters say. Since I'm going to write this down but not read it at the reading, I don't have to be afraid of what I say. Of course I'm a co-operationist, and proud of it. We used to call co-operationists quislings at first, but the Masters made us stop. Connotations, they realize, can be pretty damaging to reputations." (Jack Tisdall pointed out that anyone—anyone at all—might have been a co-operationist since, according to Dr. Trillis, the Masters encouraged secrecy on that one item. So now, on circumstantial evidence alone, they can accuse people of being Co-ops. But what purpose it will serve I can't quite figure. I'm sure Dr. Trillis would know. And I *still* don't think he was a co-operationist, despite what Tisdall and the others read from his diary.)

"Today, without warning, the Masters left. We shall miss them sorely."

"Poor Mr. Campbell was almost lynched this morning. The outrage of trying to harm a co-operationist leaves me almost sick to my stomach. Only the rabble hate co-operationists."

"I wonder if I will be able to pick up the pieces of a now-meaningless life? The Masters are gone; the rabble takes over. I wonder, is life worth living?" (Now, that certainly isn't the professor talking, I don't care what they say. He was a humanitarian all the way, and he loved life. Is this what he meant by compulsive exhibitionism? I realize I'd be wiser not to write this down because people are going to hear it, but I've got to write it because this is the way I feel. Like Diane Mallory removing the breast veil as soon as she leaves her mother's sight?)

"I'd better destroy this diary while I still have the opportunity. If it's read, I haven't a chance." (And Jack Tisdall explained how he found the professor's diary, smouldering but not ruined, on the edge of our block's incinerator. Looked burned, too.)

So, that's about it. The block's vigilante committee has a warrant for Dr. Trillis' arrest. The charge: co-opera-

tionist, not reading his complete diary, trying to destroy his diary. I'd hate to be in his shoes, but I can't help feeling sorry for him and believing that he didn't write all that business they said he did.

I dreamed about Diane Mallory last night.

13 April

Friday the 13th, and if ever Dr. Trillis believed in black cats and broken mirrors and walking under ladders and the like, he believes it double now. Ordinarily, the vigilante committee doesn't have jurisdiction off our block, but special arrangements were taken and Dr. Trillis was captured while leaving a classroom at Columbia University in Manhattan today. The Columbia committee didn't help in the capture—but didn't hinder it, either.

They brought the professor back and have him, under guard, in the basement of building 6 down near the corner. By "they" I mean Jack Tisdall and the other members of our vigilante committee. So far, the professor's being held incommunicado, but you'd be putting a noose around your own neck if you tried to talk with him, anyway.

Diane Mallory—who's been leading me a merry chase, by

the way—seems to know more about what's going on than most people, since she spends a great deal of time with Tisdall, the lucky so-and-so. Maybe I'll call her later tonight and try to find out.

I had that odd feeling I was being followed again last night, but the more I looked for whoever it was, the less sure I was that I was being followed. Probably my imagination, but I sure hope no one decides to "find" my diary. I still don't see how I could have lost it.

LATER—Diane wasn't at home. Mrs. Mallory admitted she was out with Jack Tisdall. Strangely, Mrs. Mallory isn't so mad about Diane and Jack—or Diane and anyone else—any longer. It's as if she didn't like it but now thinks it will do her girl more good than harm. Worth looking into, if I had the time.

16 April

I've had it. Wish I didn't have to stop to scribble this thing down. My goose is cooked. More later. I have to find a place to hide. Damn this writing compulsion. And damn Diane Mallory too, for that matter.

17 April

A warrant's out for my

arrest, as I suspected. Someone almost saw me yesterday. Have to be careful. There's the old Myers shack, three blocks north of here. Should make a good hiding place. I hurt my leg pretty bad in that fight at the diary reading, but at least I got away. You can't miss this limp, though.

18 April

I guess they're looking for me, but they haven't thought to come north three blocks and try the old Myers shack. It gets pretty cold in here at night, with the wind whipping in through torn shingles on the roof. If it rains, I'll be drenched. I've spent most of the night hours scrounging around for food. Never put on weight that way, but at least I'm not starving.

I'm going to take this breather to write down what happened on the night of April 16. Not very pretty, but I guess Dr. Trillis was right. I got to the diary reading as usual and was going to await my turn and explain what I was doing with a brand new diary, when Diane Mallory popped up and gave me a shock. She held my old diary in her hand, claiming she found it in my apartment and it was her duty as a loyal citizen of the block to read some

excerpts. I protested that I'd always read everything I wrote but Jack Tisdall took the floor and asked me, "In that case, what do you have to worry about?"

I grumbled and listened as Diane started to read. I never wrote those things! I never said, "I hope it's all a mistake. I hope the Masters decide to come back, because we need them." I never wrote, "If the people on the block ever find Dr. Trillis' diary, he's done for. His only hope is that the incinerator fire did a good job. The people—the vapid, blundering people—can't realize, or won't realize, or don't want to realize that the Co-ops are the best friends they ever had. Aside from the Masters, of course." I've never been a Co-op. I never even thought like a Co-op. Someone wrote those things there after Diane Mallory had stolen my diary. I'm not one to go around accusing people, but any way you looked at it, the finger pointed at Jack Tisdall.

"Those are nothing but lies!" I cried, standing up and trying to take the diary from Diane's hands. Men stood between us, pushed me away, shoved me back in my chair. "Someone's trying to frame me!" I shouted. "Don't ask me why. I don't know why. I de-

mand to see that diary. I can show you it's not my handwriting, just like Dr. Trillis never wrote all those things you said he did."

I was shouted down. I could do my hollering at the vigilante tribunal next week.

I guess I lost my temper, because I hardly remember what happened next. Diane Mallory looked very self-righteous, more so than the rest of them. I think I yelled something about Jack Tisdall, for he smiled at Diane, then leered at me. All at once, we were fighting. I felt the knuckles of my right fist strike his face, felt the contour of his nose crunch, felt the good numbing pain shoot up my arm to the elbow.

Then, with Tisdall falling back into the crowd, his face an ugly red smear, I plunged out into the darkness. I heard Diane Mallory screaming, saw the others rising, their shapes silhouetted before the light, to pursue me.

I fled.

19 April

The rain, very cold. I'm drenched, and I've been coughing all day. I'm afraid to leave the Myers shack now, because they'll find me. I went out looking for food about an hour ago and found a dis-

carded newspaper, the neighborhood gazette, four pages of cheaply mimeographed paper. The headline was:

DR. TRILLIS FACES EXECUTION TONIGHT

If I remain here, they'll find me. I could leave the neighborhood—or leave the city entirely—but where would I go? There's so much I don't understand. Dr. Trillis could supply the answers, I'm sure. But this is Dr. Trillis' last night of life. They're going to kill him.

Because they fear him? Because, somehow, the Masters instilled in them a sickness which he doesn't share? I think so.

I've got to find out.

20 April

Dr. Trillis is not dead!

This will be my last entry in the diary. Dr. Trillis smiled when I told him I must write down what happened last night. It doesn't matter whether I set it down on paper or not: *they* will never see it.

The crowd gathered in the rain outside Building 6 last night. The rain drummed down on their umbrellas. It was dark and cold but they were tense and expectant,

like spectators at an athletic event. I slipped in among them, jostled by elbows and hips. It was the last place they would look for me. I listened:

"... already drawn lots. Five lucky stiff's are going to shoot him."

"... of course he has to die. If a man doesn't write the truth in his diary—"

"What are diaries for?"

"Who said that? Traitor!"

I moved closer to the brick wall of the building. Most of the windows were dark, but a dull yellow glow came up from the cellar entrance. About half an hour after I got there, limping on my injured leg, I saw Jack Tisdall arrive. I couldn't help smiling with satisfaction when I saw the bandage across the bridge of his nose and the swelling under his left eye, but I stopped smiling when I thought of Dr. Trillis.

Tisdall disappeared down the ramp to the basement. A man carrying a carbine weather-slung across his right shoulder marched back and forth slowly, stolidly, keeping the crowd off the ramp.

If they kill Dr. Trillis, I told myself suddenly, they will have to kill me with him. A chill came over me, but it wasn't fear. All at once, I was not afraid. It was expectation

and I had never felt anything like that feeling.

I waited on the fringe of the crowd until they began to drift toward the basement entrance again. Someone said, "I think he's coming."

And, another voice:

"Hooray for Jack Tisdall!"

Tisdall came first, arrogant despite his disfigured face. Dr. Trillis was behind him, shoulders back, head up, unafraid. Two armed guards followed Dr. Trillis, smirking.

"Executioners, forward!" someone bellowed.

Five figures detached themselves from the crowd and a lane was cleared to the curb, where a man I didn't know opened the tailgate of an old station wagon and produced a rifle chest. It was opened and, in the light of a flashlight, five carbines slick and gleaming with oil were removed. The executioners were armed, checked their weapons, stood back.

I held my breath. My palms felt dry and hot. My heart was beating as loud and unsteadily as the uneven idling of the station wagon's engine.

They marched Dr. Trillis through the lane to the curb. At first I thought they would take him somewhere in the station wagon, but instead they went on marching across

the street with him and stood him against the brick wall of Building 7. Smirking, the five executioners began to follow them.

The last one in line was Doug Lafferty, a plump middle aged man, proprietor of the neighborhood grocery. I waited until he had one foot off the curb, until the crowd began to flow in a quick tide around him and across the street.

"Doug," I said softly.

He turned around. He looked at me. He opened his mouth to shout, but I drove my left fist into his belly and he exhaled air instead. He had a puzzled look on his face. Puzzle and pain, I thought. It was the look of everyone since the Masters' unexpected conquest and since their abrupt departure. I hit him again and grabbed the carbine before it could clatter against the curb.

"Hey, that's the guy we've been looking for!" a man shouted.

I clubbed at his face with the butt of the carbine. I don't know if I hit him or not, but he disappeared in the gloom. They were all yelling by now, all turning from Dr. Trillis toward me.

"Run, Dr. Trillis!" I cried, and fired my carbine into the air.

Other shots answered it, but the crowd was still between me and Dr. Trillis' executioners. Frenzied and afraid now, the crowd broke. Two still figures were left on the pavement as I sprinted across the street. The carbines shattered the sudden silence and something knife-edged and hot slammed into my shoulder. I staggered but kept going. I thumbed the carbine to automatic and squeezed off half the clip blindly, then found myself on the other side of the street.

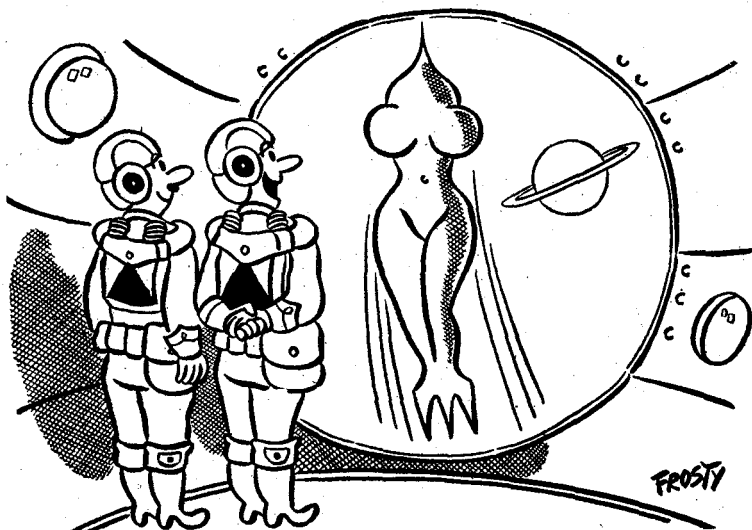
"The station wagon!" Dr. Trillis cried.

I nodded. My shoulder was numb now. I had fired the

light rifle with one hand and did not know if I had the strength to do it again.

Dr. Trillis took my arm, rap with me. Once I turned and saw Jack Tisdall leading half a dozen armed men after us. I stumbled, then hurled the carbine with all my strength into Tisdall's face. He screamed, fell back, momentarily halting the pursuit.

We gained the station wagon three or four strides ahead of the nearest men. I remember Dr. Trillis slamming the door shut on the driver's side. I was drifting off into a warm wet fog of forgetfulness and not caring. The tires screeched. The wag-



"Ah! There goes our sister ship!"

on lurched from side to side. "Behind you!" Dr. Trillis cried.

Somehow, I turned around. Without thinking, I vaulted over the seat of the station wagon. A man was clinging to the tail gate, trying to lift himself up and inside. He snarled like an animal. I staggered toward him as the wagon skidded around a corner on the wet ground. I stamped on his hands with my heels. I placed my foot against his face and pushed. He fell back into the rain, screaming . . .

When I awoke, the sun was shining. It wasn't Dr. Trillis kneeling beside me. It was a beautiful young woman I had never seen before.

"You're all right now," she said. "You're safe. Everything's going to be all right."

"Dr. Trillis?" I said.

"He's here. He's safe, too. Rest."

But I sat up and looked around. Rhododendron and mountain laurel clung to the rocky hillside in front of me. "Where . . ." I began.

"In New Jersey. Dr. Trillis will tell you."

Her name was Lorie. Lorie. I vowed I would know her better. I watched her walk away, watched Dr. Trillis coming toward me.

"You saved my life," he

said. His voice was unsteady.

I grinned. "I had to. You were the only one who could answer my questions."

"It's like a peep show with them," he told me. "The Masters wanted it that way, so they could keep tabs on us, one man spying on another for them. But when the Masters left their training proved too strong. Humanity is sick, don't you see?"

"Yes," I said, "but—"

"The diaries shouldn't have meant a thing now. But they meant everything. It was as if the Masters hadn't returned to wherever they came from. It will be that way for a long time, except among the few people who somehow haven't been contaminated."

"Yes," I said, beginning to understand.

"Here in this settlement are some of those people. We have to prepare, and wait, and build—until one day . . ."

His words drifted on. "Good people," I said. "Like Lorie."

He smiled. "Like Lorie."

"And we have to build together?"

"Yes."

It was a wonderfully green and sweet-scented valley nestled in the hills. I stood up and went looking for Lorie.

THE END

THE POISON PEN

They became the lords of the solar system—the conquerors of cosmic space—only to find in the end that there was—

NO PLACE TO GO

By HENRY SLESAR

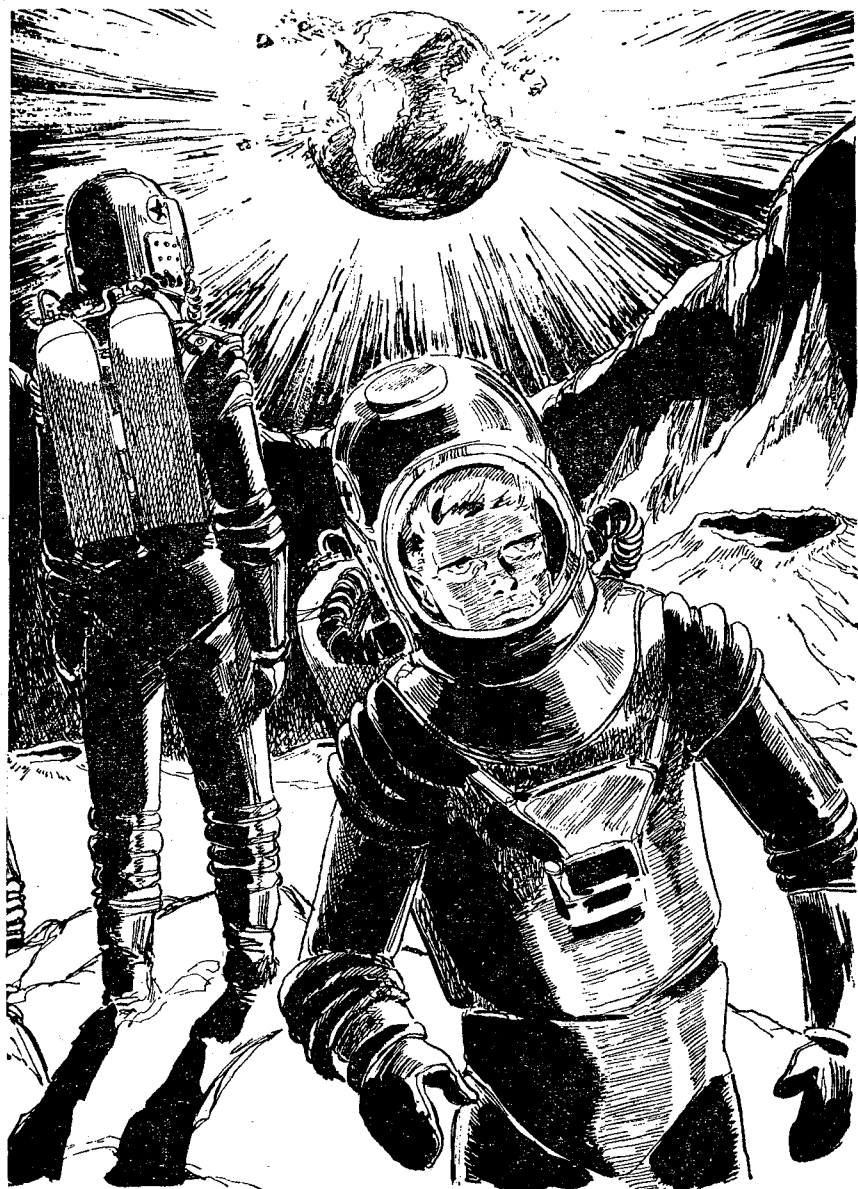
ILLUSTRATOR SCHROEDER

THERE were four of them. Major Cato was the leader, because the gold leafs on his shoulder said he was, and because the others felt he was. Casey Strauss was the navigator, a big, gruff young man who rarely talked or smiled. Finney was the co-pilot, a slender, engaging man, popular with women. Bob Joyce was the youngest, and the most erudite. He knew rockets, and that was important to a rocket crew, even on their sixth journey to the Earth's neighbor.

They were the elite. They were four out of a squadron whose members numbered less than sixty. But out of the fif-



Each man suffered in his



own private hell as he watched the cosmic explosion.

teen exploratory moon trips to date, they had made six. They were proud, but not cocky. Space took care of that. It was too vast to sustain cockiness.

The sixth landing was the easiest one yet. They cheered Major Cato until he was forced into an embarrassed command that silenced them. Then they began the long, arduous preparations to establish camp on the moon.

"Lieutenant Finney," Major Cato said.

"Yes, sir?"

"I want our radio gear set up before anything else. Command headquarters wants immediate contact, so we can't afford to wait until we erect shelters. That must be done first."

"Sure," Finney grinned, his handsome face obscured behind the plate of his helmet. "I'll set it up, Major. Wouldn't mind getting a message to Frisco myself; there's a little gal named Gloria—"

"Save it," Cato said, moving off towards the others.

He wasn't a big man, even in the bulky space suit. He was compact and thickly muscled, and his soldierly stride was almost comical in the lesser gravity. But his crew didn't smile.

Casey Strauss was removing supplies from the ship with the aid of Bob Joyce. He was mumbling through his helmet microphone all the time, as if in complaint. Joyce seemed to be elated; he tossed the supply car-

tons about like a juggler, exhilarated by their reduced weight.

"Snap it up," Major Cato said. "We don't have time for games, Joyce."

"Yes, sir; sorry, sir," Joyce said hastily.

"This isn't a kiddie picnic," the Major said.

"No, sir."

When he walked off again, Joyce tapped Strauss' arm and jerked his head in the Major's direction, as if to say: "What's eating him?" He couldn't say it aloud; the helmet communicators received all messages. There weren't any spoken secrets among the crew.

They worked hard, and diligently, and with a minimum of waste. They might have been detailed to a supply depot on Earth. It wasn't that they were inured to the mystery of space, but they were a taut crew, and it was business before pleasure, work before wonderment.

Four hours later, Cato called a halt to their efforts.

They stood around in the gray-white dust, in a valley of jagged rocks and craters, and looked at the magnificence of the sky. The stars, unblurred by the hazy clouds of Earth, shone diamond-hard overhead. But the eight eyes on the moon sought out only one object in the heavens—the awesome, beautiful greenish globe that had given them life.

"Earth," Strauss muttered. "God, it makes me feel funny, looking at it. I guess I'll never

get over that feeling, if I see it a million times."

"I know what you mean," Finney said wryly. "Damn thing makes you choke up inside, like it was a woman or something."

"That's because it's home," Joyce said. "You've got to feel that way about it. It's home."

"All right!" Major Cato snapped. "Let's stop day-dreaming. Everybody back to the ship. We'll get some rations and hit the sack; we can't work if we don't eat and sleep."

They returned to the slim shaft of white and silver metal that had brought them there, and as they walked, without speaking, the three men in Major Cato's command exchanged looks that were as explicit as words. What was eating him? What was wrong with Major Cato?

They ate, and then they slept, and then they returned to work.

An hour afterwards, it happened.

Finney was fooling with the radio gear, and puzzling over short bursts of static. Strauss and Bob Joyce were stacking oxygen equipment, and Major Cato was inside the vessel.

Finney saw it first. He shouted so loudly into his helmet mike that he nearly burst the eardrums of the others. They came on a flying run to his side, and followed the direction of his pointing arm and horrified eyes. Then the light came to flood the

universe with blinding power, a light so strong and incredibly bright that it dimmed the sun. Then there was the sound, reverberating through the cosmos and making the very craters of the moon tremble. But their eyes revealed the worst of what was happening, eyes that were riveted on the green world overhead.

There, on the murky patch of land that would have been Europe (where they couldn't say: France, Germany, Italy, Spain? A thousand images crowded their minds) there, like a monstrous white fist bursting its way out of the greenish globe, came a cloud whose deadly nature was instantly apparent. Then the horror was compounded, as the cloud grew greater and greater still, and was succeeded by a rendering concussion that tore a gigantic hole in the very surface of the world. Enough! Enough! their minds cried, but the nightmare wasn't ended. Another blast came from north of the first, and then another from the east, and still another. The hole erupted fire, and mountains flew from the surface into space. And then there were no end of eruptions; volcanically they came, belching smoke and hellfire and debris, tearing the very heart from the hemisphere, and then encasing the globe itself in an envelope of blue flame that seemed to sear and shrivel it before their eyes, until the Earth ("It's home," Joyce had said) the Earth that

had borne them, was a black, misshapen ember, reeking and loathesome and seemingly discarded by the God who had made it.

The four witnesses to the cataclysm stood sculptured in horror and disbelief, each suffering their own private hell. Then, as the mighty sounds diminished and the fires died in the night sky, they began to move. Casey Strauss lifted both hands to the cinder that had been Earth and clenched huge fists, shaking them in rage, shouting curses. Finney dropped to his knees on the gray-white dust and went limp. Joyce, the youngest, wandered off in an erratic course, as if walking could take him away from the terror he had seen. Only Major Cato remained fixed to the spot, a rigid monument as solid as the rocks of Tycho Brahe.

In their helmet receivers, they heard only the unending sound of Strauss' invective, until his curses became unintelligible mumbling, and he stopped. Then they saw the big man, like a felled oak, fall to the ground.

Cato reached him first.

"Finney," he commanded. "Help me."

Finney didn't answer.

"Joyce!" Major Cato shouted. "We've got to get Casey into the ship. He's in a state of shock—"

Joyce turned in his wandering and stared back at his superior officer. Then he returned

slowly, and helped the Major carry the unconscious navigator into the ship. They undid his helmet, and looked at his open, staring eyes and blue lips. They removed the rest of his rig, and Cato rolled up the man's sleeve and gave him an injection of a drug which would induce relaxation and sleep. They covered him with a blanket, and Cato ordered Joyce to his bunk.

"Take this," he said brusquely, handing the younger man two small white tablets. "Take these and hit the sack; that's an order. I'm going out to get Finney."

He returned to the surface, and hoisted the limp co-pilot by the shoulders. Finney looked up at him with a twisted grin and said: "Her name's Gloria, Major. From San Francisco . . ."

They slept, sedated, for almost twenty hours, with Major Cato watching over them from the pilot's chair until he nodded and slept himself. Then they began to stir and waken, reluctantly, and started to talk quietly among themselves about what had happened. They spoke tonelessly, dispassionately; it was the only way they could talk. Only Strauss seemed unable to make his lips and mind work; he mumbled senselessly into his microphone, until Finney suddenly leaped from his bunk in a cry of rage.

"Stop him! Shut him up!" Finney screamed. "He'll drive us all nuts!"

Cato shot out of his chair and went to Strauss' bunk. He unthreaded a bolt in the big man's suit and then reached in to yank a wire that silenced his mumbings.

"All right," he told them curtly. "Now we've got to talk. We've got to figure things out."

"Figure what?" Joyce said numbly. "What's there to figure? Earth's gone. We've got no place to go . . ."

"Then we have to stay here," Cato snapped. "And if we want to survive, then we've got certain agreements to make. The most important item we have to conserve is air, so that means we live in our suits until we can't stand our stink any longer. We've got food enough to last another six months, maybe even a year. The water tank will hold up more than that, if we're careful . . ."

"You're crazy," Finney said, his voice cracking. "It'll never last that long. And what's the difference if it did? We'll struggle along for a little while, and then—"

"Stop it!" Cato said harshly. "We can't afford any hysteria. If we want to stay alive as long as we can, we've got to use every minute and every ounce of energy."

"What's the use? What's the use?" Finney moaned. "We can't save ourselves here. And there's no place else to go—"

"Easy," Joyce said, swallowing hard. "We've got to make an effort." He fell on his bunk

and put his head in his hands. "If only we had the fuel—if only we could make it to Mercury or Mars—"

"Don't talk wildly," Cato said. "There's not a chance for such a thing, we've got to make our stand right here, with what we have. It may be a short life, but it'll be a busy one."

"Look," Finney said.

They turned to watch Casey Strauss rise from his bunk, his eyes focused nowhere.

"Thou hast laid the foundations of the Earth," Strauss muttered. "The heavens are the work of thine hands . . ."

"He's praying," Joyce said.

"No." Cato took a step towards the navigator. "That's not prayer. Look at his eyes."

"They shall perish, but thou remainst," Strauss said, his voice rising, his hands lifting slowly from his sides. "They shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed . . ."

"Casey! Can you hear me?"

"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils . . ."

"He's mad!" Finney said. "He's gone mad!"

"It's only shock." Cato came closer and touched the big man's arm. "Casey, get hold of yourself."

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven!" Strauss shrieked, raising his fists. "In one hour is she made desolate . . . for God has avenged you on her . . ."

"Casey!" shouted Major Cato.

The great fists of the navigators came crashing down on the Major's shoulders. He grunted and lost his balance, and in a flash the big man was upon him, the huge hands circling his neck; only the thick folds of the space suit kept Cato from strangling. Joyce shouted and leaped to aid the officer, while Finney stared stupidly at the scene.

Strauss' strength was of madman's quality. It took ten minutes of struggle to pacify him. Then Cato, breathing hard, said: "We'll have to chain him to the bunk, until he calms down. Finney—let's have that hypo again. We'll knock him out for a few hours."

Finney brought the needle. "Here," he said. "Why not knock him out for good, Major? He won't be any use to anybody now."

Cato looked at the co-pilot sharply, and then set to work.

Six hours later, wearied by thinking and by effort, they fell asleep again. But Major Cato was awakened by an unfamiliar sound in the ship's cabin, and he whispered:

"Joyce?"

The sound stopped.

"Bob, is that you?"

Joyce's voice, muffled by his pillow, answered.

"I—I'm sorry, Major. I couldn't help myself."

"Don't worry about it; I feel like crying myself. When I

think about the stupidity of it—"

"But it's worse than that, Major. I—I can't describe how I feel. Just the idea that there's no more Earth—no more home. I feel so drained, empty; I never felt so alone in my life."

"It's the worst loneliness you can suffer." Cato's voice was gentle. "I know what you're going through. But we have to face up to it. All we've got left is our determination to stay alive."

There was a silence.

"I don't want to die, Major."

"Then let's live. For as long as we can."

The four men slept again.

The warning came out of Cato's dreams. Like an alarm bell, it rang in his unconscious and jarred him awake, his eyes flying open in time to see the shadowy figure standing in the middle of the floor. He shouted: "*Finney!*"

The co-pilot whirled towards him, eyes flashing wildly. Then he raised his arm and fired the weapon in his hand; the explosive bullet thundered against the bulkhead and ricocheted. Cato dove low and tackled his legs, bringing the tall, slender man to the floor of the cabin. Joyce was out of his bunk in an instant, clicking on the light that flooded the ship's interior and revealing the battle taking place between the senior officers. Even Strauss stirred and tried to rise, blinking at them, almost conscious again of his surroundings.

"Drop it!" Cato said gratingly, struggling for the gun. "Drop it, Finney!"

"Let go, let go!"

Joyce jumped to his aid, kicking at Finney's wrist until the co-pilot howled and released the weapon. Then Cato dragged him to his feet and shook him.

"What happened?" Joyce said.

"Lieutenant Finney had ideas. He thought he'd increase the size of the rations a little . . ."

"I wouldn't hurt *you*, Major!" Finney blubbered. "So help me, I was going to take care of *them*, only them!"

On his bunk, Casey Strauss was looking at the chains anchored to his arms and legs, and his big face was puzzled.

"What's this?" he said gruffly. "What's the big idea?"

Joyce grinned. "Looks like Casey's snapping out of it. I only hope it's permanent."

"It doesn't matter," Cato said wearily. "He'll be all right in a little while. We'll all be all right. Even you, Finney."

"What do you mean?"

"The game's over. I'm supposed to hold out for another twenty-four hours, but I can't take that chance. So I'm calling a halt right now."

Joyce stared at him, bewildered. "What game, Major? What are you talking about?"

"Unchain Strauss and get the airlocks open. We're going outside."

"Unchain him? But Major—"

"We'll take the chance. Let him go."

Joyce obeyed, while the Major held Finney's weapon pointed at the co-pilot. Then he dropped the gun contemptuously on his bunk and said: "You, too, Finney. We're all going out."

They opened the airlocks, and stood about, waiting for Cato's command.

"I'll go first," he said.

They followed him out onto the moon's surface.

"Now look," Cato said.

They turned their eyes in the direction of his pointing arm.

They stood around in the gray-white dust, in a valley of jagged rocks and craters, and looked at the magnificence of the sky. The stars, unblurred by the hazy clouds of Earth, shone diamond-hard overhead. But the eight eyes on the moon sought out only one object in the heavens—the awesome, beautiful greenish globe of Earth.

"A miracle! A miracle!" Strauss cried, choking with sobs.

"The Earth," Finney said dully. "It wasn't destroyed. It didn't happen at all . . ."

Joyce couldn't speak. He turned to the Major and stared, unbelievably.

"No," Cato said. "It didn't happen at all, not really. It was an hallucination, a delusion, and I created it for you. The food you ate the first night contained a drug, a hypnotic chemical. When you were asleep, and under its influence, I planted this terrible vision in your heads. I

(Continued on page 146)

made you see the Earth destroyed.

"You've been guinea pigs in an experiment, a test to determine the reaction of men on another world, who are cut off completely and irrevocably from the mother planet. We're going beyond the moon in a few months; plans are under-way to send our first ship to Mars, to Venus, to Mercury... and before long, the stars. But they wanted to know how men like yourselves—trained, experienced, so dependable in all oth-

er ways—would withstand the shock of total rupture from Earth, how they would accept the certainty of loneliness and death, when the most important umbilical cord of all was cut."

"The experiment is over," Cato said. "Now we're going back. Lieutenant Joyce—"

"Yes, sir."

"You're second-in-command as of now. And Bob—"

"Yes, sir?"

"Take care of yourself. They are going to need you. On Mars."
THE END

Continued from page 91

are more politically feasible than any kind of world government that requires nations to give up significant aspects of their sovereignty. And yet, the outcome would be to reduce the competition for energy resources which arouse the most serious issues of international rivalry, not to mention the gains that would follow in the area of pollution control. Population control will require education in the necessities of coercive regulation, but this, too, can be internationally planned without violating national identities. National cultures will be around for a long, long time, even if we do learn to recognize that we all draw life from one, single planetary ecology. This recognition, built into international cooperation in sci-

ence and education, will make the world safer for national cultures to exist without crowding each other with their differences.

Without the philosophic ideal of looking at ourselves from outer space, an ideal which preceded the technology of the Apollo program, we should not have any prospects at all of enjoying science and education as our first line of defense against inadvertent world wrecking. Science education, for governments and for peoples, means looking down on ourselves as a pendant spectator. Perhaps science fiction, which has helped pioneer the viewpoint of the pendant spectator, will play an important role. Here's looking at yourself!

THE END

NOW ON SALE IN THE JUNE FANTASTIC

Ghyl Tarvoke differed in no real way from the other boys of the ancient city Ambroy except in one particular: he desired to know the truth. His quest for Truth and the source of the legend of EMPHURIO is one of the most remarkable stories you'll ever read—JACK VANCE'S NOVEL EMPHYRIO.

PUZZLE IN YELLOW

By RANDALL GARRETT



GHEVIL of Archeron dropped his spaceship silently down through the night. For five rotations of the planet, he had been watching the natives.

The planet looked ripe for plucking. If their defenses and general state of development were as poor as he thought, the hordes of Archeron could overwhelm them.

It was a particularly beautiful world; the third planet from its primary, with large seas, and broad green conti-

nents. The inhabitants were fairly intelligent, because he could see cities easily from space. But it was obvious that they had not yet developed space travel. It looked as though they would be easy to crush.

But he had to be sure. Before he could return to Archeron to report his find, he would have to investigate the planet more closely.

He had decided not to land near any of the big cities; such a concentration of population might be dangerous.

He wanted an out-of-the-way spot which he could investigate at leisure without running too great a risk of being detected. Finally, he had found what was obviously a military installation. It was a heavy, stone-walled fortress that appeared to have no energy screens around it; obviously these beings had not developed ray projectors yet.

He smiled grimly to himself as he settled his invisible ship silently into a wooded area less than half a mile from the big fortress. All he would have to do was get inside the fortress and take a look around. He'd soon know what sort of opposition the hordes of Archeron would have to overcome.

Hovering smoothly on anti-gravity beams just above the treetops, Ghevil checked his instruments. Good! There were no signs of any kind of detection radiation. These people obviously hadn't even developed radar yet; if they had, they would surely use it to protect a fortress like this one.

Ghevil applied two of his eyes to a binocular telescope.

It was a military fortress, all right. There were armed men at the walls, and sentries pacing back and forth at

their posts. He was unfamiliar with the weapons they carried, but they were quite obviously crude; they couldn't be ray rifles.

All that night, Ghevil watched the fortress, checking the sentries, investigating the defenses, and making notes on the layout of the place.

When dawn came, he lowered his ship to the ground in the woods. Relying on his invisibility at night was well and good, but he didn't know enough about these beings yet. They might have eyes that responded to different radiations than his own; they might—just *might*—be able to see the ship.

From the woods, he watched the fortress by day. Once, he saw a detail of soldiers march out of the big gate. It was easy to tell the enlisted men from the officers by the uniforms they wore. The enlisted men, who were following the officer's orders, wore light gray uniforms, while the officer wore a uniform that was somewhat darker.

Ghevil studied the beings closely. It would be fairly easy to imitate one of them. They had only two eyes, but Ghevil could see as well with two eyes as he could with four—at least for awhile.

Imitating the pinkish color of their skin would be easy, too. There would be nothing to it.

That evening, Ghevil spent his time poring over his notes, trying to devise a plan to enter the fortress. It was well past midnight when he heard the crunch of footsteps in the woods. He turned on his visiscreen and looked out. In the moonlight, he could see one of the natives. It was a soldier, an enlisted man, by his uniform. Ghevil chuckled softly to himself. Here was his chance! A soldier outside the fortress for a stroll!

He watched the soldier for a moment. The being was carrying a hand weapon of some kind; it was best to take no chances.

Aiming one of the death ray projectors on the outside of his ship was the work of a second. He pressed the stud, and the silent, lethal beam dropped the soldier in his tracks.

Ghevil stepped out and walked over to the corpse. Within a matter of minutes, he had changed his appearance completely; he now looked exactly like the dead thing at his feet. Then he stripped off the gray uniform and donned it. He took the handgun from the corpse's limp

hand and then took the body inside his ship, where the atomic disintegrators burned it to nothingness in three seconds.

Now he was ready. All he would have to do was walk back to the fortress and go in through the gate. There was no need to know whether there were any passwords. If he were within five feet of any sentry, he could read its mind easily. It would be very simple to pass himself off as one of the soldiers.

Boldly, he walked toward the fortress.

He was twenty yards from the wall when a sudden, odd wailing sounded through the air. He stopped, puzzled. What did it mean? Suddenly, a light came on, sweeping the ground around the fortress with a powerful beam.

Ghevil realized that something had gone wrong. Quickly, he turned and ran for the protection of the woods.

He was too late. The searchlight beam hit him, and was followed quickly by a chattering roar. Something hit Ghevil in the back, throwing him to the ground. He tried to lift himself, but another something and then another slammed into his body. A final one smashed into his brain.

Ghevil of Archeron shuddered and died. His last thought was that now his report would never reach Archeron at all.

Jim Galloway stared down at the body the men had brought into the infirmary. "He's wearing Mike's uniform, and he looks like Mike,

but Mike never had *yellow blood*! Who do you suppose he is, Captain?"

The Captain of the Guards shook his head. "I'm damned if I know, Warden. But if it's one of them flying saucer men or something, why would he try to put on an escaped prisoner's uniform and break into a prison?"

THE END



THE FUTURE IN BOOKS



David Lindsay: *A Voyage to Arcturus*. Ballantine Books, N.Y., #73010, 1968. 287 pp., paper, 95c

This book was first published in hard covers in the United States by Macmillan in 1963, and seems to have been reviewed by nobody; it is not mentioned in any of the standard sf reference books, and the only jacket quotes the Ballantines came up with for it are all British. But the British publication evidently goes back quite a while, for C. S. Lewis mentioned it in a lecture in 1955 (he called it "shattering, intolerable, and irresistible"): in all that time, *somebody* over here should have noticed it.

It will madden purists who approach it as "hard" science fiction, for it piles scientific nonsense upon irresponsibility upon ignorance. *Arcturus* is described as being a double star (it is not), and as being more than 100 light years away (it is 41). The crossing to its planet Tormance (*Arcturus* is a very young star, about 25 times as big as Sol, and almost surely has no planets, habitable or otherwise) is made in 19 hours under the power of

"back rays" ("Unless light pulled, as well as pushed, how would flowers contrive to twist their heads around after the sun?"), a concept I think I last encountered in the theoretical physics of Richard S. Shaver. All of these bloopers occur in the first 33 pages of Lindsay's text—I was able to check the facts about leaving my desk chair, which is why I used the word "irresponsibility" above—and the physics, chemistry and biology of *Tormance* itself are out-and-out insane.

But if the science is as bad as all this—and it is, it is—how does this edition happen to have a laudatory introduction by Loren Eiseley, an eminent biologist and the greatest living science popularizer (sorry, Arthur and Isaac, but . . .)? Eiseley is a poet; does he admire Lindsay's style? No, he calls it "occasionally rude and awkward;" and Lewis, in a 1962 interview, said flatly that "the style is appalling."

The fact seems to be that these objections are largely beside the point. It would be pleasant if Lindsay had had a better command of the language, and especially if his characters did not

all talk alike (for they certainly don't all *think* alike); but the occasional violence he does to English soon passes by unnoticed, or is swamped out by his tremendous feeling for color and indeed for all kinds of sensual experience. As for the science, Lindsay gives you fair warning at the outset that he cares nothing for the agreed-upon world of the sciences, for the very first chapter is a seance. Nothing in the book can be taken as real, or even as what it seems to be; the whole thing is a multiplex vision.

On Tormance, as the hero progresses from one part of the planet to another, and from one culture to another, he is given and/or deprived of a number of accessory organs, both sensory and manipulative. As each such change occurs, he becomes a different animal, and hence senses the interactions of the forces of nature in a new but appropriate way. This is reasonable, though it has seldom been noted in science fiction: If you were 25 microns high and lived in a fresh-water pond, your universe would turn completely upside down twice a year and gravity would be of virtually no importance to you, while such forces as surface tension and the interfaces between density layers would dominate your life. And how, asks Eiseley in the preface, would you see the universe if you were double-sexed, or radically symmetric like a starfish, or a corporate creature like a Portuguese man-of-war?

But Maskull is also a sentient creature, as a starfish most probably is not, and retains through each change his memories and his feeling that he is himself—what we might call his cortical integrity. But he finds, as did Josef K.

in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, that being shaped like a cockroach gradually makes one act and think like a cockroach; not only do his world-view and his appetites change, but so do his morals, and his opinions of the god he is seeking under many names.

The end is ambiguous, except insofar as the whole mosaic may add up to something unstated. For me, as for Lewis, "this ghastly vision comes through;" for Brian Aldiss and Kingsley Amis, it didn't. Lindsay himself has been quoted as saying: "I shall never appeal to a large public at all, but I think that as long as our civilization lasts, one person a year will read me."

You may be that person; try it and see.

—William Atheling, Jr.

Charles L. Harness: *The Ring of Ritornel*. Berkley Publ. Corp., New York, 1968; No. X1630. Paper, 191 pages, 60c

A Golden Age is made from odd ingredients. The Harness of the late 1940's and early 1950's uncannily resembled an A. E. van Vogt who had been incompletely repaired by some minor god. He threw ideas at you faster than you could take them in (but they were never silly ones); he made a vast show of familiarity with a variety of sciences (and in fact really *was* familiar with them); his plots were bewilderingly complex (but he never left any loose ends); his narrative style was wooden (but with occasional flashes of poetry); his characters all talked alike (but didn't think or act alike). The repairs, of course, are between the parentheses.

The apparent culmination of this

brief but dazzling career was a novel first published in *STARTLING STORIES* as "Flight into Yesterday," and then in book form as *The Paradox Men*. (Neither was Harness' original title, which was "Toynbee 22.") I say "apparent" because by 1948 he had written another novel, *The Rose*, into which reportedly he threw every idea he had had over some five years, and which he could never sell in the United States. It appeared in England in 1953 in *AUTHENTIC SF* and I haven't seen it, to my sorrow.

Then he reappeared, only a few years ago, in *ANALOG* with two stories which did not resemble van Vogt in the slightest. The style had suddenly become outright eloquent; the characters beautifully and completely differentiated; and above all, what carried the stories was no longer just intellectual brilliance, but in one case a wealth of emotion, and in the other, a wild and completely unexpected sense of humor. Both stories got Nebula nominations, and I seem to recall that one of them also made the Hugo ballot for its year.

The present novel, I would guess, represents a transition between the old Harness and the new. It has all of the virtues of the old Harness, and also all of the faults; but the faults have become less obvious, the virtues more so. The style, for example, is more flexible, and the poetic touches more numerous. In fact, the book even contains a number of original verses, which reveal that he has a genuine gift in this field. If one is to introduce a poet into a story, it is usually foolhardy to quote any of his work, but Harness gets away with it.

The central concept is colossal, covering more time and space than any-

boyd I can think of since Stapledon. To cite only one example, the society in which the story is set covers twelve galaxies. (Since people still travel in spaceships and it takes finite time to get from one place to another, it would be impossible to hold such a society together; Harness gets around this problem by ignoring it.) Like *The Paradox Men*, this work is a cyclical novel, ending where it began and suggesting that the whole story, and indeed the whole history of the universe, is about to repeat itself, perhaps an infinite number of times (hence the title). One cannot be sure about this, however, for an important part of the book is a running ideational conflict between chance and predestination, which Harness deliberately does not resolve.

The plot is the most complicated I have ever seen from this author, which means that it probably holds the all-time record for anybody. It defies summary—which, in any event, I do not think a reviewer should ever attempt except in very special cases—but it makes perfect sense, eventually.

On the face of it, it would seem impossible to cram all of this into one novel. However, the book is longer than it looks, since the type is quite small and closely set. At a guess, I would call it 100,000 words. Also, Harness employs a number of compression devices. One of them does not work: Whenever scientific explanation is called for, the characters lecture each other, at length, in a manner reminiscent of the Gernsback *AMAZING* days. One of these lectures is given twice; the second one is shorter, and would have been sufficient. Editing would have helped, but I can sympa-

thize with any editor confronted with the task; the texture has so many knots in it that he might have felt that any cutting would start it to unravel.

Despite a few such exasperating moments, it's a fascinating and rewarding book.

—William Atheling, Jr.

Philip Jose Farmer: *The Image of the Beast*. Essex House, North Hollywood, Calif., No. 0108, 1968. 255 pp., paper, \$1.95.

It is 1970 or not long after. A terrible smog holds Los Angeles in its grip. And somebody has captured Harold Childe's partner, put the man through sexual tortures and mutilated him, and then sent a filmed record of the tortures and mutilations to the L.A. Police Department.

Harold Childe is a private detective, and he was about to ditch his partner. But, stomach still writhing from his viewing of the film, he vows to get the person or persons unknown who have done this terrible thing. He is working with a cop named Bruin.

"See you," Bruin said. He put a heavy paw on Childe's shoulder for a second. "Doing it for nothing, eh? He was your partner, right? But you was going to split up, right? Yet you're going to find out who killed him, right?"

Right. And thus opens Philip Farmer's *The Image of the Beast*.

In his eloquent, if misplaced, postscript to the book, Theodore Sturgeon asks that we not label—ah, Label—this book. And he preaches us a sermon on the terrible consequences of Labeling—which, apparently, can be ranked as a Major Sin and perhaps the Cause of Mankind's Ills. I think it is a shame

that Farmer did not have the opportunity to read Sturgeon's message before he wrote the book in question; we might thus have been spared one of the most lugubrious attempts to combine sex and science fiction ever written.

If we avoid Labels in judging the novel, what are we to make of its slapdash pastiche of three old-fashioned pulp genres—the private-eye story, the 'spicy' horror story, and the monsters who turn out to be from another dimension—all served up between lip-smacking sex scenes?

"A handful of poor tilted souls," Sturgeon tells us, in reference to the pornographic scenes, "will drool wetly all the way through, skipping all the living connective tissue and getting their jollies out of context." He seems to feel that these readers will be missing the "Truth" of the book, but I suspect they will be better rewarded than those of us who had hoped for a novel of some genuine merit.

Let's talk about some of those Labels we have been cautioned against. To begin with, there is the label the publisher has placed on the book. Along with a price-tag which automatically brands it a sex-novel (no one pays \$1.95 for a cheaply produced paperback for any other reason), the front cover is blurb'd "A Remarkable Adult Novel." Now, anyone who browses the newsstand in these enlightened times knows very well what an "Adult" novel is, and the juxtaposition of this blurb with the adjacent price-tag underlines the point. Opening the cover we find a page on which the sole legend, in very black type, reads "This is an original Essex House book—the very finest in adult reading by the most provocative modern writers." A

page further, in a biographical sketch of Farmer facing the title page, we encounter this remarkable opening phrase: "PHILIP JOSE FARMER spurted on the scene in 1952 . . ."

So perhaps those "poor tilted souls" may be forgiven the waste of their buck-ninety-five on a book which purports to seek after Truth. After all, even the device of a postscript or introduction is no novelty to them; a great many of the works of hard-core pornography presently flooding the newsstands have similarly erudite introductions, all designed to give weight to the publisher's fondly-held notion that these are indeed works of "redeeming social value". (A much better case could be made for the actual value of pornography, *qua* pornography, than the present-day hypocritical stand these publishers so half-heartedly pursue.) And after all, the book does indeed contain a number of sex scenes, all of them written with exactly the same monotonous attention to lubricious detail which the sex-book reader has come to expect in his purchases.

But what about that "living connective tissue" of which Sturgeon spoke? What of the book's "context"?

Dreary pickings, actually, and the quote from Officer Bruin should tip a hint in that direction. Farmer writes from one of the most brilliantly untrammelled imaginations I've ever known, but he has often seemed lacking in that self-critical faculty which would allow him to shape and edit his own work. The results have usually, in recent years, been abortive and Farmer's hallmark has been the imprisonment of his glowing ideas in wooden and inflexible prose. Farmer is a classical case of the "uneven"

writer.

I've rarely encountered any real sense of involvement between Farmer and his fiction—his protagonists are usually unendearing and he often places them in emotionally sterile settings—and perhaps the reason is his intellectualization of Theme and his apparently determined desire to write Literature rather than Entertainment. Whatever the causes, he manipulates his characters unmercifully, often in flagrant contradiction of the motivations he has previously established for them, or—as in the case of this book—he sets them to walking woodenly through his plot without the whisper of life to them. Harold Childe (a name only slightly less ham-handedly Symbolic than Bruin) is explained to us on several occasions, but never demonstrates the slightest personality, talent at his profession, or intelligence. He is a faceless automaton (despite the fact that everyone notices his resemblance to Lord Byron, of all people!) and he exists solely to allow the reader a handy vehicle for vicarious adventures.

Unfortunately, the story itself is cobbled together from some pretty hoary old plot ideas, as previously noted, and Farmer tells it without a sense of pace, movement, style or color. What could at least have been passed off as "camp" is merely dreary.

Under the circumstances, what fare best in the book are the sex scenes. In his descriptions of mutilation, torture and horror, Farmer evokes the psycho-sexual with a vivid imagination (the implications of which I will leave for others to analyze). But nobody ever told Farmer that sex could be realistically described in terms not weighted with all the clichés of hack-

work pornography, and so even these, his best scenes, suffer from inept writing.

Under the circumstances, Sturgeon's perorations on behalf of this novel are not merely presumptuous, they are unfairly patronizing. Thus, in the long run, not one, but two reputations will suffer from the publication of *The Image of the Beast*.

—Ted White

Ursula K. LeGuin: *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Ace Science Fiction Special, N.Y., No. 47800, 1969. 288 pp., paper, 95c.

I've found it a pleasure to watch the growth and development of Miss LeGuin as a writer. In her first novel, *Rocannon's World*, she built an intriguing if lightweight novel on the bones of her superb short-story, "The Dowry of Angyar," which appeared in the September, 1964 issue of this magazine. The short story, a combination of fairy-tale myth and hard-science extrapolation, probably said all that will ever have to be said about the time-line displacement induced by travel between the stars. It also introduced Rocannon and the subsequent mythos of four books. If her first novel was largely a cross-world trek story à la Andre Norton, her second, *Planet of Exile*, was far more ambitious. In that book she set out to show the subtle effects of alien ecology upon human colonizers, and chose for her setting a planet on which ten local years were the equivalent of six hundred of our years—a planet where the seasons last lifetimes. Against this setting, she told the story of a love affair between a native and a human, and its surprising viable product. If the book

had any fault it was simply that she tried to put too much into its few pages. (The first two books were halves of Ace Doubles; all of Miss LeGuin's books have been published by Ace to date.) On the surface, *Planet of Exile* had nothing in common with *Rocannon's World*, but both were set in a common universe, and divided by the passage of considerable time, during which the "mindspeak" learned by Rocannon in the first book had spread throughout the human settlements of the universe. In her third book, *City of Illusions*, Miss LeGuin returned to Earth, to a time when humanity has been conquered by aliens or apparent aliens who have learned to do the impossible: to lie telepathically. The protagonist is a product of the melded races of *Planet of Exile*, and it is in his power to free humanity. *City of Illusions* is a grand, almost epic novel, of van Vogtian scope and implication, and built well upon the earlier novels. Having read and enjoyed all three, I was impatient to read the fourth, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, and prevailed upon Ace Specials editor Terry Carr to let me read the book in manuscript.

It was not the book I had expected, and yet by the time I had finished it I was even more impressed with Miss LeGuin's talents. This is her first major novel in the field, and one I cannot recommend too highly.

Like the earlier books, *The Left Hand of Darkness* is set in the common universe, at the remove of some time from its predecessors. Now humanity is returning to its abandoned colonies and reestablishing diplomatic contact. But thousands of years have passed and some colonies have evolved in singular ways. Certainly none more so than

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column that science fiction fandom was formed, to grow yearly in strength until today fan conventions are routinely attracting hundreds of attendees.

"Extravagant Fiction Today . . . Cold Fact Tomorrow." We believed that. We believed, with the rocket enthusiasts, in the eventuality of space travel, of journeys to the Moon and the planets. We believed in it in that special way that is impossible to explain to a newcomer today, twelve years after the dawn of the true space-age.

I can no longer be sure how far my faith goes back. I was reading science fiction at the age of eight, and I recall it excited me even then with visions of rocketships and space-travel, and that I filled pages in my school notebooks with doodlings of rockets and stars. It was inevitable that I should, early in my teens, become a science fiction fan drawn increasingly into the inner circles of "fandom". Didn't we *all* believe?

With age comes, if not maturity, sophistication and even cynicism. There's an old joke that you can discuss anything in a science fiction fanzine except science fiction. After ten, fifteen or twenty years reading the stuff, you take so much for granted; your early sense of wonder becomes jaded. Yeah, yeah, space-travel, sure; but what's *new*? My generation was not Gernsback's pioneering generation; my generation was the one that followed. We weren't the crusaders; we consolidated already-won gains. We didn't invent science fiction; we only improved upon it.

But we believed. Like the generation before us, deep down inside we believed it: "Extravagant Fiction To-

day . . . Cold Fact Tomorrow."

I was one of several writers interviewed by a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronical* during the recent World Science Fiction Convention held in Berkeley across the Bay. "Science fiction is not concerned with prophecy," I told the man tendentiously. I was reacting against all those Sunday suppliment pieces in which a feature-writer adds up our box-score and decides we really haven't predicted today's world all that well. "We aren't trying to predict an accurate tomorrow," I said. "We are simply projecting *possibilities*, all kinds of possibilities, wildly conflicting possibilities, all those possibilities for tomorrow in which we see a good story."

Well, that's true enough. But when we score—when we do call the right shots—we like to brag about that too. Sure, in actual fact most of yesterday's extravagant fiction looks just as extravagant today. Most of it was never written with any other intention. But in *spirit* we are realizing those extravagancies as facts. So what if, in 1946, Robert A. Heinlein could still tell the story of a private, backyard flight to the Moon in his classic juvenile, *Rocketship Galileo*, while in point of actual fact today's rockets cost so many millions of dollars that only the mightiest nations can afford to build them? The *spirit* of what Heinlein wrote more than twenty years ago (and the spirit of all those who wrote of space voyages before him) has been vindicated by the Apollo Eight mission.

As I write this, a newsmagazine lies open on my desk at my left, its pages open to a double-page spread that tugs violently at my sense of wonder

every time I let myself look at it. In the foreground is a lunar landscape: low grey hills and worn-looking craters, an oddly close horizon; it looks for all the world like a skilful tabletop model, and its surface is pocked with a multitude of dimples that might have come (were it indeed only a tabletop model) from many ladies' high heels. Beyond that close horizon, black sky; velvety black, a rich, deep black.

And in the sky—Earth. Large and looming, its upper half sunlit and jewel-bright, covered with white cloud-swirls through which gleam turquoise-blue oceans and salmon landmasses, its lower half black with the blackness of space.

A startling sight, and it's *real*. This is a color photograph of the Earth, as seen from seventy miles above the surface of the Moon. This is the stuff of our dreams. This is *ours*, our belief, our faith made real.

This is where AMAZING STORIES has been pointed since its birth, for the last forty-three years. It was Hugo Gernsback's dream and now it's our reality.

Hugo died, in August of 1967, only a little over a year too soon. But he lived to see the initial conquest of space, and he had lived to see himself vindicated in his many personal predictions hundreds of times over. He lived long enough to see the Science Fiction World, and for him, I am sure, it all came true: the extravagant fiction of his early days is now, in the largest sense, cold fact. It was his dream that made it real.

But still we look ahead. Still we dream. Somehow reality has a way of diminishing many of our dreams. The

marvels of science we imagined only yesterday are today's electric can-openers and transistor radios, and somewhere along the line all the wonder in them has disappeared.

Today the newsmagazines and other mass media patronize us. They have taken our wonders and marvels away from us and made them mundane "news". They speak of the Apollo mission in glowing terms, and then they contrast it with what they call "sci-fi" (a most ugly and contemptuous term for science fiction). "This is real," they say; "not like that sci-fi stuff."

To them our dreams will always be only dreams and nothing more. Rooted in the pedestrian realities of life as they see it, the mass media are incapable of a sense of wonder, incapable of dreaming dreams that might yet be realized in fact. Theirs is a sharp dichotomy: reality is reality and dreams are dreams. What is real was *always* real. What once we dreamed must always remain only a dream—and it's best put behind us as a part of our feckless, romantic youth. And, most galling of all, when our dreams break through into reality—when we succeed in sending three men around the moon and bring them safely home—the mass media rejoice and then quickly rewrite history. *They always knew we were going to do it.*

Sure, they did.

The ship came down out of the heavens looking, according to a lucky Pan-American pilot who saw it, like a comet, trailing an incandescent white streamer some one hundred miles long. It had entered its 26-mile re-entry window perfectly, thus bringing about the

conclusion of a mission that was for all intents and purposes flawless. The boosters and ship contained more than three-and-a-half million working parts, and performed without error. Launching was only six-tenths of a second late, the lunar orbit was just a half-mile off, and the splash-down was within three miles of the waiting carrier.

It was two days after Christmas, 1968.

Col. Frank Borman—Capt. James Lovell, Jr.—Major William Anders—we salute you. AMAZING STORIES salutes you.

We knew you could do it.

The Apollo Eight mission was pretty exciting for me, but so is the editorship of AMAZING STORIES. Every science fiction fan, and almost every sf writer has spoken at length, at one time or another, on what must be just about everyone's favorite topic of conversation: Things I Would Do If I Was Editing X Science Fiction Magazine. So have I.

There are, I think, two basic ways to edit a magazine like AMAZING: it can be approached as a job and done—even enjoyed—on that level, or it can be approached as an enthusiasm, a sort of super fanzine, and edited for the love of it. Most magazines outside our field are edited by nine-to-fivers whose involvement with the products of their editorial toil is minimal. For them it is just a job, not so very different from writing advertising copy or driving a bus. But the science fiction field is a special field, a field where the dedicated amateurs have always outranked the bored professionals. Scratch one of today's writers or editors and you'll almost always find a

former fan underneath. Perhaps it is because the sf field has never paid well, and has always demanded loving devotion from its pros; perhaps it is just that undying sense of wonder in each of us which drives us to express ourselves here, rather than elsewhere.

My approach to AMAZING is, of necessity, one of love and of enthusiasm. Compared with the earnings of my books, my work on this magazine is not as well-paid; compared with the earnings of writers in other, more lucrative fields, my work in science fiction as a whole is not as well-paid. But here I am, working with others like me, simply because this is what I—and they—prefer to be doing.

In order for me to more thoroughly enjoy AMAZING, I am making changes, large and small, which I hope will lead you to more thoroughly enjoy the magazine. Most of these changes are subtle: changes in tone, in emphasis, in balances. Some of them will not be immediately apparent. Some are still in the wings—I'm pretty excited about some of the projects we still have in the planning stages, and which I hope I'll be able to tell you more about soon. But some are here now.

I'm definitely excited about the first material I've been able to buy for AMAZING and for FANTASTIC, our sister magazine. Beginning in this issue, Robert Silverberg's "Up The Line" hits me more strongly than anything I've ever read by him before. Maybe it's his use of first-person narration—and the way he suggests, without aping him, Robert Heinlein's better work. Silverberg has been writing in this field for more than a decade, but I'm convinced he's only now beginning to hit his stride as a

major science fiction writer, and a novel like "Up The Line" is going to do a lot to consolidate his new reputation for him.

Jack Vance's "Emphyrio" in FANTASTIC is also a major work by a long-established writer who keeps coming up with fresh ideas and stories. There is a solidity and a depth to "Emphyrio" which, I am certain, is going to make that novel a Hugo contender this year.

We're expanding our departments, too. Not only is the letter column back, but in this issue we revive *The Club House*, a column wherein many of the recent sf fanzines are examined and reviewed. In FANTASTIC we are launching a new department, *Fantasy Fandom*, wherein some

of the best fanzine articles and essays are reprinted for you. This, plus expanded book reviews, and our other regular departments, is all designed to give you a better, more fully rounded magazine, a magazine which gives you *more* than any other. I might add that we have dispensed with guest editorials; from now on I will be using this space to talk directly to you on an editor-to-reader basis.

I'd like to hear from you—from *all* of you—about these changes, and what you think of them. I must ask your patience—it is going to take me a while to slip comfortably into the editorial harness—but I hope you'll tell me when I'm doing something wrong, and, conversely, when I'm doing it right.

—Ted White

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Erhenrang, where arctic conditions prevail, and humanity has evolved (probably as the result of an experiment in genetics) into a unisexual race without distinguishing genders. Genly Ai comes to this world to negotiate a resumption of galaxy-wide relations. He is initially presented as somewhat callow, and somewhat smug. But his encounters with the different nations of Erhenrang and its philosophies and peoples open his eyes and go a long way towards maturing him.

Miss LeGuin has done a superlative job in presenting the cultures of this strange world. As in *Planet of Exile*, she shows the interrelationship of culture and ecology. But she goes further. In special chapters she recounts the folk-myths of the unisexual people, gives expeditionary reports on their procreational habits and mores, and introduces several religious/philosophical systems. Her politics are soundly rooted, her science makes sense, and,

more to the point, she has an intensely human story to tell in the developing relationship between Genly Ai and Therem Harth re ir Estraven.

To me, this book has all the depth and all the impact, as well as the scope, of *Dune*—and at a fraction (albeit sizeable) of that epic's total number of pages. Solidly fitting together fragments of legend, the narration of the two principles (each initially an alien to the other), and even an appendix, Miss LeGuin has built a time and a place which I feel I have tasted and felt. The depth and breadth of her undertaking is to be marvelled at. And, as if not content with this *tour-de-force*, she has topped it all with a unique and compelling (and totally *honest*) love-story which rates for me with the very best of Sturgeon.

The Left Hand of Darkness has to be one of the year's best books.

—Ted White

THE CLUB HOUSE

The Club House first appeared in *AMAZING* with the March, 1948 issue, and continued, more or less regularly, until this magazine made the change-over from pulp to digest in 1953 (at which point all features were dropped). Throughout that time, it was the special province of Roger Phillips Graham, or Rog Phillips, as he called himself then. Unlike the fanzine reviewers before him, Graham did not patronize the fanzines he reviewed, nor did he patronize his readers. As a matter of fact, despite some early hostility towards the column in fandom, Graham quickly became respected by most fans, and found himself becoming one, a sort of osmosis-like process.

Although Graham later revived the column briefly for Ray Palmer's *UNIVERSE* (Palmer having been *AMAZING*'s editor at the time Graham originally began the column), it was always associated with *AMAZING* and few nostalgic fans recall its later incarnation.

Roger Phillips Graham died only a year or two ago, but I think that if he were alive, he would have been pleased to resume the column or turn it over to such a capable columnist as John D. Berry.

AMAZING experimented briefly with another fanzine-review column in the mid-fifties. "Roger De Soto"'s *The Revolving Fan*. The pseudonymous author of the column wrote with a supercilious air, his column was not well-received, and it lasted only a short time. It has now been over a

decade since *AMAZING*, or, indeed, any science fiction magazine, has published a regular column of fanzine reviews.

Our purpose in reviving the column is simply to restore a link of communication long-shattered. Traditionally, sf fans found out about fandom and fanzines from their favorite sf magazines; the usual progression was from casual reader to devoted reader to 'casual fan' to devoted fan. The magazines' letter-columns swarmed with fans and more casual readers who wanted to discuss the last issue and everything else under the sun; when a reader decided this would no longer suffice, he began writing to the addresses listed in the fanzine-review columns, requesting copies of those strange publications, fanzines. As often as not, what he found awaiting him more than rewarded him.

When the Great Changeover occurred in the mid-fifties, most pulp magazines dying or transmuting into digest-sized versions of themselves, letter-columns shrank, and most subsidiary features simply disappeared. Ever since that time, fans and would-be fans have bemoaned the loss. We decided to try an experiment and restore these columns. Their ultimate success or failure, of course, depends upon your response, and your interest in them.

Rather than attempt a definition of "fanzine," or an explanation of every in-group term, we have decided to let the context explain itself. Each review

will make explicit at least what each fanzine in question is like and whether or not you might be expected to find it of interest. However, I would caution anyone interested in these publications to remember that all fanzines are published solely for the love of it, and that like all loves they may from time to time wane in their editors' interests. Few fanzines maintain any

kind of rigid schedule, and fanzine editors are notoriously unwilling to commit themselves to drudgery when the enjoyment wears thin. Thus, most fanzines enjoy relatively brief, and sometimes erratic life-spans (the average is two to three years, and one or two dozen issues), although some titles have been in continuous publication for a great many years.

—Ted White

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #28, November, 1968; 50c or \$3 per year; bi-monthly, from Richard E. Geis, P.O. Box 3116, Santa Monica, Calif. 90403; 68 pp., multilithed.

This fanzine has just changed its name from PSYCHOTIC to SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW. Fifteen years ago, PSYCHOTIC was the leading fanzine in the field. It was born in 1953, and died a lingering death in 1956. Then, in the fall of 1967, editor Geis revived the fanzine, attracting a great deal of attention and enthusiasm from old fans who remembered and from newer ones who came upon it for the first time; indeed, the new PSYCHOTIC has been credited with sparking a general revival throughout the fanzine field, which was at a low ebb in 1967. The fanzine quickly became again a focus for arguments, discussions, and fannish contact of all kinds; its letter column became the heart of the fanzine, and for a while PSYCHOTIC was Where The Action Was, in fandom.

All during that time, however, PSYCHOTIC was changing, and it has now changed so much that it no longer is the focal point of fandom; other, newer fanzines have taken up the revival that it sparked, and Geis's fanzine has gone off on its own path.

That path is both rewarding and frustrating. PSYCHOTIC, now SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, has lost the vitality that it had a year ago; its once-vibrant letter column has in the last two issues become a public plaza filled with bickering merchants and soap-box orators. However, the magazine has found a new and different vitality. It is becoming less of a fanzine and is leaning more toward professional interests—sort of a "little magazine" of the science fiction world. The meat of the magazine has shifted from its letter column to the articles and reviews appearing in it.

The most important single item in this issue is the text of the speech given at the 26th World Science Fiction Convention last Labor Day weekend by its Guest of Honor, Philip Jose Farmer. Entitled "REAP," Farmer's speech is an important document in itself. It is a summation of the science fiction field and a lone finger pointing the way for it to go, into a greater involvement with the world around it and the serious assumption of the responsibilities of sf fans' claims of being far-sighted dealers with the future. Above all, Farmer's speech is a call to action. It should be read.

This issue also features the con-

cluding installment of an extremely long and detailed article on mind-expanding drugs—from marijuana to LSD—by Earl Evers. It is written from personal first- and second-hand experience, and it is informative and perhaps useful as a guideline to what you are doing when you experiment with psychedelic drugs. It is also quite interestingly written.

There are two wholly fan-oriented items in the issue, my own column and "Fans We All Know . . . And Perhaps Wish We Didn't," by Arthur Jean Cox. My column is a four-page personalized commentary on several aspects of the fan world that I found interesting; Cox's article is again one of a series, this time following the rather self-explanatory title. He is basically exposing certain types of mental atrophy that have set in in fandom over the years, holding them up to the light and criticizing them. There is also, of course, the long, long letter column, with letters from pros and fans alike, on a great variety of topics.

The rest of the material divides easily into two categories: the frivolous and purely entertaining, and the reviews. Geis has managed to keep the editorial personality of SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW light and amusing, despite the serious discussion and outright mudslinging that sometimes dominates the contents; his editorials (both of them, at the back and the front of the fanzine) touch lightly on a variety of subjects, including the changes in the magazine itself. This atmosphere is bolstered and maintained by the many cartoons that are scattered liberally throughout each issue. With cartoons and more serious art by some

of the best artists in fandom, including Bill Rotsler, Jack Gaughan, Ray Nelson, Doug Lovenstein, Steve Stiles, and Vaughn Bode, SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW is a very well-illustrated fanzine. And the reviews of new books, and occasionally films and other things, by Geis and any of a number of other reviewers, have multiplied to the point where the editor regards them as the most important part of the fanzine.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW is no longer a reliable mirror to reflect fandom as it is today, but it is still a very good and interesting fanzine. And perhaps it is becoming a good mirror for the science fiction field as a whole, or at least one dynamic portion of it. Geis said he was going to print 1000 copies of this issue, so there should still be plenty available. *Highly Recommended.*

NIEKAS #20, Fall, 1968; 60¢ or 4/\$2.00; irregular (two or three issues a year), from Ed Meskys, Box 233, Center Harbor, N.H. 03226, and co-edited by Felice Rolfe and Charlie & Marsha Brown; 108 pp., mimeographed.

NIEKAS is consistently one of the biggest fanzines published; there has not been an issue under 50 pp. in years, and the past few issues have all been closer to 90 pp. It has never been as well edited as it should be, so the result is a rather uneven fanzine. You are apt to find extremely thoughtful and well-written articles side-by-side with mediocre material, in no discernible pattern. Still, NIEKAS has acquired a large, vocal readership, and enthusiasm runs high, even if quality sometimes suffers.

There is a pronounced emphasis on J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and all related fields of fantasy, as shown by such things as the "Glossary of Middle Earth" that has been running for many issues, originally compiled by Al Halevy and more recently taken over by Bob Foster. The Glossary is an attempt at cataloguing and identifying every reference in Tolkien's trilogy—a mammoth task, and one that will be dear to the hearts of devoted students of Tolkien while impressing others as monumentally worthless. The preoccupation with Tolkien is evident throughout each issue of NIEKAS, but this issue gives an example of the editors' love of diving hook, line and sinker into a Special Interest with a large section of articles dealing with Georgette Heyer. Heyer seems to be sweeping much of fandom as an enthusiasm, but exactly that same attitude of mania and fascination with trivial details that shows up in NIEKAS and elsewhere manages to turn off many others who might be mildly interested in Heyer—or Tolkien, or whatever. Nevertheless, the Heyer section includes one of the best pieces in this issue, Ted White's "Manners, Love, & Sex," an article that starts with Heyer and expands into an insightful look at teenage sex and love and the classical ideal of unrequited love.

There is other good stuff in the issue. The editors cleaned out their art file and used as much of it as possible, so this issue is very heavy on art, some of it poor and some excellent. There is an article by Tony Lewis, one of the members of a committee set up to study the future of the world convention, which deals with

just that: the changes that will have to be made in the worldcon structure owing to the emergence of several active fandoms in foreign countries. This is a complex problem, for the worldcon has been virtually monopolized by American fandom for thirty years. It's an issue that will be increasingly important in fandom in the next several years, despite the simple solutions that many fans would like to believe exist.

Other major items in this NIEKAS are Donald A. Wollheim's Guest of Honor speech from the 1968 Lunacon and "In Other Words," by Harry Warner, Jr., an interesting article about the difficulties of translating foreign sf. There is a large, varied review section, with reviews of books, fanzines, and a little of everything else by all sorts of people. There are editorials by all the editors and various other columns, as well as a long letter column (also sloppily edited, with both good and bad letters included), and assorted filler items strewn throughout the fanzine.

NIEKAS is a fannish scrapbook, with a little of everything and not much organization. It has been described for years as having "something to interest everyone." The uneven quality can be irritating, but the gems buried in each issue usually make it worth getting. And it is a good fanzine for someone new to fandom, as long as he realizes that NIEKAS is neither the best nor the most representative of fanzines. *Recommended.*

WARHOON #25, Nov., 1968; 60c; quarterly, from Richard Bergeron, 11 East 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021; 56 pp., mimeographed.

WARHOON is one of the top three or four fanzines being published today. It has an air of sheer quality that lends it the feeling of a learned and sophisticated journal of fandom. This atmosphere has been known to scare off some readers and would-be contributors, especially as it is accented by the formidable appearance of pages and pages of solid type, but there is really a great deal of humor and easy fannishness in WARHOON. This is the fanzine's third incarnation: its first few issues were published in the early 1950's and earned no distinction at all; in 1960 the fanzine was revived and it became one of the leading fanzines of the time, finally petering out around 1964-5. Last spring Bergeron decided to start it up again, and in three issues it has assumed its place of eminence once more. (As you can see, the past year has been a time of revival for many old fanzines.)

In appearance, WARHOON is a thick, blue-papered fanzine that is always neatly mimeographed and features the extremely original artwork of its editor, Richard Bergeron. He is also one of the fanzine's best writers, in his editorial, his FAPA mailing comments (WARHOON is also sent through FAPA), and his comments in the letters column. The very best part of WARHOON is the columns related to Irish Fandom, that group of fans in Northern Ireland who have been the source of some of the greatest humor in fandom in years past. First, there is "The Harp That Once or Twice," a column that has been written for several fanzines over nearly twenty years by Walt Willis, the guiding light of Irish Fandom and one of the few truly great writers that fandom has ever produced.

The "Harp" is complemented by a column without a fixed name by Bob Shaw, another part of Irish Fandom and a fanwriter of great talent who is sometimes overlooked because he stands so close to the blinding light of Willis' writing. (Shaw has also become a pro of note in the last few years.) To complete the emphasis on Irish Fandom, Harry Warner, Jr., fandom's most eminent historian, is writing an excellent biography of Walt Willis, which has already seen two fascinating installments.

Those three columns, plus Bergeron, form the heart of WARHOON's brilliance. Beside them, the other regular columnists and outside contributors are overshadowed. There are columns, usually dealing with some aspect of science fiction, by James Blish (this time superceded by a transcript of his speech at the 1968 Phillycon) and Robert A.W. Lowndes. In this issue there is the conclusion of an exhaustive two-part review of Harlan Ellison's *Dangerous Visions* by Ted White and a "Final Statement" on the subject of that book by Ellison. All the material in WARHOON is at least good; most of it is excellent. *Highly Recommended.*

LOCUS #18, Jan. 23, 1968; 6/\$1, 12/\$2, or 18/\$3; biweekly, from Charlie and Marsha Brown, 2078 Anthony Ave., Bronx, N.Y. 10457; 10 pp., mimeographed.

This fanzine is what is known as a newszine—a fannish newspaper. Newszines are among the most ephemeral of fanzines, and LOCUS is just the current frequent source of news and comment. LOCUS is edited with some flair and a light tone, and its

news covers both the professional and the fannish spheres, as well as anything else of particular interest. An average issue contains information on convention and club news, very brief fanzine reviews, changes of address of fans (who are well known for their peripatetic nature), cartoons, and so forth. Most readers are liable to be uninterested by some part of the contents, but a reliable newszine is a useful service, and one that most fans will want to subscribe to. *Recommended.*

QUIP #10, Nov., 1968; 50c, no subscriptions; bimonthly, from Arnie Katz, Apartment 3-J, 55 Pineapple St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201; 46 pp., mimeographed.

QUIP is another of the very best fanzines appearing. It is also one that will give new fans some trouble, because it is oriented heavily toward the "fannish fans," those fans who are intensely interested in fandom itself, its traditions and history, usually coupled with a tendency toward humor and wit. Fannish fanzines are in one sense the epitome of fandom, for they celebrate the pleasure that their editors and writers feel in taking part in fandom itself, but in the past several years, during a period where there is less than the usual coherency in fandom, a great many people came to fandom through one side-interest or another, never really gaining a view of fandom as a whole. They are often called "fringefans," a pejorative term that means a partial fan who is just on the fringes of fandom (although who is or is not a fan may vary widely according to one's own point of view), and many

of them have been condemned fannish fandom as needlessly ingroupish and hostile to newcomers. This is usually an unjustified accusation; fandom is an ingroup, and it is the recognition of this fact that makes a fanzine different from just any amateur magazine. Besides, most fannish fanzines—the best ones, anyway—are not unduly snobbish or hostile to new fans. All this is just to show you that a new reader will come up against many things—references, fannish jargon, ingroup humor—that he won't understand at first, but don't be put off by this; if you stick around you'll pick it all up. And QUIP is one of the best fannish fanzines.

QUIP usually leads off with a several-page cartoon cover by Ross Chamberlain, involving the imaginary adventures of the editors and other local New York fans (until recently, QUIP had a succession of co-editors—so many, in fact, that it became a standing joke), but this issue it is condensed to a mere single-page cover. On the inside, one will find an editorial by Katz (quite short of late, but in the past they have run to several pages of interesting commentary), and a myriad of articles and columns, all dealing in one way or another with fandom, quite often humorous, and liberally illustrated with fannish cartoons sprinkled throughout the fanzine. This issue's two most outstanding features are an installment of Harry Warner, Jr.'s regular column, "All Our Yesterdays," and the first part of Steve Stiles' TAFF report, called "Harrison Country." Warner's column, which has appeared in several other fanzines over the years before it came to QUIP, is devoted to fan history; Harry Warner,

Jr., is the author of a comprehensive history of fandom in the 1940's, also called "All Our Yesterdays," issued from Advent: Publishers early this year. His column delves each issue into fandom's long past to give a detailed and fascinating look at a fanzine or fan event of years gone by. This time he tells the story of Claude Degler, one of the craziest stars ever to flash on the fannish horizon, who caused an incredible uproar in the 1940's with his "Cosmic Circle" club and his claims that fans were "star-begotten" and destined to rule the world. The quotes from actual Cosmic Circle publications are fascinating, sometimes morbidly so. Steve Stiles' "Harrison Country" is the detailed account of his trip to England and to the British National S.F. Convention last April, a trip he made at the expense of TAFF. TAFF is the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund, an organization some fourteen years old whose function is to raise money to bring European fans to the United States and American fans to Europe (usually the British convention, although the next U.S.-Europe TAFF delegate will probably attend the 1970 worldcon in Heidelberg, Germany). Each year or so, sometimes more often, fandom elects a delegate to make the TAFF trip, and it has been traditional for the TAFFman to write up his travels in a trip report. Stiles' is the first to be serialized in a fanzine for a long time, but "Harrison Country" is a credit to the art; it is an extremely well-written piece, probably the best single item in this issue.

There is also a short humor piece by editor Katz, a fannish comic strip *cum* article by myself, and extensive

fanzine reviews by Greg Benford, who is one of the two most perceptive fanzine reviewers currently writing (Arnie Katz is the other; his reviews appear in another fanzine). Benford's fanzine reviews not only give you a good description of the fanzine in question, but he takes plenty of space to give an in-depth analysis of just what makes the fanzine what it is; his reviews are especially helpful for fan-editors themselves, but they will also be interesting and instructive for a newcomer.

QUIP concludes with a very tightly-edited letter column. The editing of "QUIPs From Readers" is both its best virtue and its worst fault; on the one hand the letters are picked and cut so that only the very best material sees print; on the other, it is so tightly edited that it does not have the flow and looseness common to many other fanzines. There is virtually, nobody else these days editing a letter column as selectively as Katz, but although it can be criticized for lacking informality, it does accomplish what the editor wants: it is a sparkling and compact compendium of comments from the readers.

The next issue of QUIP is almost published as I write this, so it may not be possible to get this issue. This is a good time for me to remind you that there is a considerable time-lag between the day a fanzine is published and the day you read a review of it in AMAZING. In the case of frequent fanzines, this often means that one or more issues have published in that time; even in the case of irregular fanzines, the issue reviewed may be sold out by now. So when sending for a fanzine, although you may re-

quest a certain issue, you can never count on getting a particular back issue that you want. It is better just to ask for the current issue. And in the case of QUIP, because it's published primarily for the fun of it, you cannot subscribe; you can send money for one issue, and after that Arnie Katz would prefer that you send a letter of comment, or your own fanzine in trade if you are a fan-editor yourself. *Highly Recommended.*

Other Fanzines:

Each month I will list the other fanzines that I have received, or at least all those that I feel would interest AMAZING's readers. In this first installment, I've stuck to reviewing fanzines that are fairly good and would be useful as introductions to fandom for an interested reader. Beginning with next issue, however, all fanzines received will be considered for review (unless the editor asks me not to review it), and I won't refrain from giving the knife to the really bad fanzines.

The fanzines in this list are not necessarily worse than those reviewed; it's just that for one reason or another they did not seem to call for extensive criticism.

CRY #178, Dec., 1968; 40¢, no subscriptions over \$2; six-weekly, from Vera Heminger, 30214 108th Ave. SE, Auburn, Wash. 98002; 52 pp., multilithed. A very old club fanzine, recently revived. Lively, but mediocre.

OSFAN #44, Jan., 1969; 15¢ or 12/\$1.50; monthly, from Hank Luttrell, 2936 Barrett Sta. Rd., Kirkwood, Mo. 63122; 6 pp., mimeographed. A clubzine and newszine; less frequent

than LOCUS, but more organized, and with better fanzine reviews.

DAVID MALONE'S SCIENCE FICTION FANZINE #1, Dec., 1968; 30¢ or 4/\$1; irregular, from David T. Malone, Bacon Rd., Roxbury, Conn. 06783; 30 pp., ditto and multilith. A new fanzine from a new fan.

TANSTAAFL #6, Dec., 1968; 25¢; irregular, from John Godwin, 2426 Belvedere Dr., Wilmington, N.C. 28401; 22 pp., mimeographed. Also published by a fairly new young fan.

THE NATIONAL FANTASY FAN, vol. 28, no. 6, Dec., 1968; free to members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation; monthly, from Mrs. Janie Lamb, Route 1, Box 364, Heiskell, Tenn. 36654; 10 pp., mimeographed. The official organ of the NFFF; write to Janie Lamb for information.

BEABOHEMA #2, Dec., 1968; 40¢; irregular, from Frank Lunney, 212 Juniper St., Quakertown, Pa. 18951; 66 pp., mimeographed. New, enthusiastic, mediocre.

SANDWORM #6, Dec., 1968; 20¢, no subscriptions; quarterly, from Bob Vardeman, P.O. Box 11352, Albuquerque, N.M. 87112; 34 pp., mimeographed. An interesting and often a bit sardonic fanzine. Also available with it is a 15-pp. report on the world-con last Labor Day in Berkeley.

QUARK #8, Nov., 1968; available for show of interest; quarterly, from Lesleigh and Chris Couch, Route 2, Box 889, Arnold, Mo. 63010; 70 pp., mimeographed. An apazine produced by a brother and sister, which is also sent to friends and non-apans. Personalized, with an emphasis on rock music.

RATAPLAN #2, Nov., 1968; 30¢ Australian, 6/\$1.80, or 12/\$3.60;

monthly, from Leigh Edmonds and Diane Bangsund, Flat 1, 166 Glen Eira Rd., Elsternwick, Victoria 3185, Australia, with co-editor Bernie Bernhouse; 24 pp., mimeographed. Genzine attempting to breath more life into Australian fandom.

STARLING #13, Jan., 1969; 25¢ or 4/\$1 (but this issue 50¢); irregular, from Hank Luttrell, 2936 Barrett Sta. Rd., Kirkwood, Mo. 63122, with co-editor Lesleigh Couch; 74 pp., mimeographed. Oriented toward rock music and sf, one of the best fanzines coming out of St. Louis fandom.

LE ZOMBIE #66, Dec., 1968; sent to those the editor wants to send it to; incredibly irregular, from Bob Tucker, Box 506, Heyworth, Ill. 61745; 28 pp., mimeographed. An old, old humorzine (this is the 30th Anniversary issue), which may not be available by the time you read this, but it's worth trying. The last issue came out in June, 1958.

FANTASY NEWS #9, Jan., 1969; 35¢ or 3/\$1; irregular, from Harry Wasserman, 7611 N. Regent Rd., Milwaukee, Wisc. 53217; 66 pp., mimeographed. Devoted to science fiction and horror films, with a touch of humor.

SCOTTISHE #50, Dec., 1969; 25¢

or 4/\$1; quarterly, from Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, 6 Langley Ave., Surbiton, Surrey, United Kingdom; 20 pp., mimeographed. One of the mainstays of British fandom; low-key, but consistently interesting.

HAVERINGS #36, Oct./Nov., 1968; 8/\$1; bimonthly, from Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, 6 Langley Ave., Surbiton, Surrey, United Kingdom; 10 pp., mimeographed. A comprehensive review of all the fanzines Ethel receives; sometimes perceptive, sometimes not.

NYARLATHOTEP #6, Sept., 1968; 30¢; irregular, from Ben Solon, 3933 N. Janssen, Chicago, Ill. 60613; 86 pp., mimeographed. Big, thick, attractive, and well-edited; subjects range from sf and fandom to anything else.

HONQUE #5, Nov., 1968; sent to those the editor wants to send it to; highly irregular, from Norm Clarke, 9 Bancroft St., Aylmer E., Quebec, Canada; 32 pp., mimeographed. A fannish fanzine of wit and humor; sometimes mediocre, but mostly excellent.

—John D. Berry
(Fanzines for review should be sent to John D. Berry, c/o AMAZING STORIES, P.O. Box 73, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11232)

THE END

(Continued from page 82)

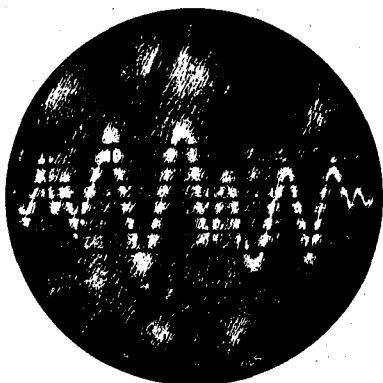
crunched. Woodenly, his whole body feeling at once adrenalated and drained, Donald Albright followed the almost-familiar rutted road back down the hill. He did not see where he was walking. He could still smell her hair, still feel her soft handclasp. Wherever he looked, her

dark eyes seemed to stare back at him. She was so young, so pretty, so . . . innocent. He began to shake with hard dry sobs.

Mother, he thought. Why did you have to die? Before I could even know you—?

The End

or so you say . . .



Dear Editor:

I don't generally write letters to the editor, but the somewhat asinine editorial by Laurence M. Janifer in your March, 1969, issue stirred me to make an answer.

First, he complains about the over-reaction to the lack of sex in science fiction. Over-reaction? Pray, tell, Mr. Janifer, where are you finding this "racy" science fiction? I read as many as four and five sf titles a week in addition to my "mainstream" reading, and I have yet to find an sf book wherein the sex was "dished up smoking hot" as he says. (*Perhaps Mr. Janifer anticipated The Image of the Beast, reviewed elsewhere in this issue. -TW*) I suspect that what plagues Mr. Janifer is a Puritanical outlook that is suspect of the bare ankle. Yet, he has written some sexy lines himself. Is he contradicting some of his own work, then?

Secondly, he sees "teetering piles of stories which consist entirely of style." Admittedly, NEW WORLDS has served up quite a lot of fluffiness without anything truly literary. But I thought AMAZING was an American magazine

and would be concerned with the sf product of this country. If Mr. Janifer has found these teetering piles of fluff in our own magazines, I wish, again, he would tell me just where. (*Without wanting to come between you and Mr. Janifer in this argument, I should point out that the British and American sf scenes are closely entwined, and that a great deal of original sf is now appearing in book form in both countries. Whether any of this would fit Mr. Janifer's description or not, I couldn't say. -TW*)

Finally, we come to Janifer's comments on the lack of humor in sf. I suspect that this is the entire point of the editorial and that the previous two subjects were camouflage. I suspect Mr. Janifer has written what he considers humorous sf and has had trouble selling it. Therefore, rather than admit that it might be lacking, he attacks the publishers and accuses them of refusing to publish humorous sf. But where does he get off saying the field lacks humor? Hasn't he read anything by Robert Sheckley? Sheckley's *Mindswap* was one of the funniest novels I have ever read. It was humor

of the absurd handled extremely well. And if not Sheckley, what about R. A. Lafferty? He did half of an Ace Double — among other things — called *Space Chantey* that was uproarious (if I may use Mr. Janifer's tendency towards strong words). It was, in some ways, the sort of humor I think Mr. Janifer may be struggling towards in his own books. But Lafferty knows humor and can handle it.

Well, enough. But one thing we need less of are the Leroy Tanner/Laurence Janifer complaint/attack/and/insinuation editorials and reviews. An editorial, or a book review, is supposed to be an opinion, yes. But it is not supposed to be a diatribe. There is a difference.

Dean R. Koontz
You may set your mind at rest on those points, in any case. Leroy Tanner's pseudonymous reviews left this magazine when Harry Harrison did, and, with the possible exception of a special case once in a long while, guest editorials are now also a thing of the past. I might take this space to add that owing to the confusion involved in the most recent change of editorial reins, my name was placed on the mastheads of AMAZING and FANTASTIC one issue too soon; the March AMAZING and the April FANTASTIC were both edited by Barry Malzberg, who rightfully deserves all credit for them —TW

Dear Mr. White:

I have never written you before. I haven't met you at some convention. And, while I've certainly read many of your letters in various fanzines, I probably would never have written you unless we had been introduced at a convention or met in some other way.

OR SO YOU SAY

So after this beating-around-the-bush introduction, just what *am* I writing you about? Well, simply to tell you how excited we are at the news that you are becoming the Managing Editor of AMAZING STORIES. And who are we, you might very well ask? We are The Society for the Preservation of Amazing Stories Magazine, or S.P.A.S.M. (not a religious organization!). And since I am the Co-Elder Ghod of the thing, I am hereby making you an honorary member of said organization. I hope you accept. It has been truly rough sledding for us. The lettercol of the NFFF refuses to print any letters publicizing us although we are all members in good standing of that venerable old club. Most of the responses to our endeavour have been, "Why do you want to save it?"

Why indeed? Except that we felt that 1) the magazine is historical, founded by Gernsback Himself in 1 SF and all that; and 2) because we felt that alone of all the stf magazines in existence, AMAZING could become something of that old (and sometimes trite) Sense of Wonder. Besides, since it could use the most improvement, we had a better chance of influencing its policies than with the more established mags like ANALOG and the Pohlzines.

So we see your advent as a breath of fresh air at long last (and don't blow it, baby, as so many of your *ahem* predatory predecessors).

May I ask what your plans for the Ultimate magazines are? *Science Fiction Review* #28 says that you intend to have several fan features. I sincerely hope so. AMAZING had the last of the lively lettercols unless you consider the two pages of postcards that IF runs a lettercol. Also, do you intend to lean more toward the New Thing or the

more, hmmm, well, regular sf? I hope that it is a healthy mixture of both with a deletion of the old cornball reprints. I've been buying AMZ and FANTASTIC lately mainly because they have had more New Wavish fantasy lately than the other prozines, at least stateside, and definitely not because of the hackish reprints.

George Inzer

Thanks for your well-wishes (I think that's what they were). I trust you've found some of your questions answered by the editorials in the last issue and in this issue, and by the stories and features themselves. But please bear in mind that the editor (or managing editor) is not the final policy-maker, and that financial considerations have much to do with various aspects of these—and all, for that matter—magazines. We'd love nothing better than to give you a magazine with nothing but new stories and features in it—but (for instance) would your response justify it in increased sales? What if we went to all new stories, but raised the price to 60¢? Would you—and all our other readers—support this change? That's the \$64 question. In the meantime, I must defend our choice of reprints. AMAZING STORIES has a rich past, and many top writers first published some of their best stories here. To categorize these stories as "cornball" or "hackish" is, I think, quite unfair. Where's your Sense of Wonder, George? —TW

Dear Ted

I'm afraid I haven't been impressed with the somewhat experimental fiction that's been running in AMAZING of late. Most of these bits and oddments aren't stories at all, but half-thought-

out incidents. There is no feeling of process in them; things just happen.

Typical themes—fear of technology, ignorance of how things function, moody nostalgia for primitive settings (perhaps because they're understandable)—combine with a narrow emotional spectrum centered around fear and hatred. Except for the Disch dinosaur story, most of the characters seem to assume that desperation is a normal state of mind that doesn't have to be motivated by the events of the story.

I've always thought the more traditional story-telling processes allowed ample opportunity to communicate a kind of density and complexity of thought, a diversity of content, a wide range of emotion. Some of the writers who've been experimenting within sf have expanded the boundaries of the field and we owe them thanks for doing it—Mike Moorcock's "Behold the Man" is a good example. But I fear the efforts that have been appearing in AMAZING along these lines don't work. They're too short, and—what's really fatal—they're unoriginal.

Greg Benford

The problem seems to boil down to the fact that every experiment isn't a winner—but some get published anyway. —TW

Sir:

As Secretary of our long established Science Fiction Club (of Kekaha, Kouai, Hawaii) I have been instructed to acquaint you with the following:

We have eight members who have read AMAZING almost since the first issue. Some 28 others have been reading it since 1945, thru the editorship of several men who are outstanding for their contributions to the field, and all the rest of us read it either from our

own subscriptions or the local news stands. (A postscript to this letter includes the notation that the club includes "12 Ph.D.s, 26 Master's degrees, 30 B.A. & B.Sc., 1 Navy Admiral, 1 Air Force Col., and 3 M.D.s; the club Secretary does not mention whether any of these honors overlap owners. -TW)

We unanimously agree that AMAZING has until lately been well up among the leaders in the field. Unfortunately, much material mislabeled as science fiction that definitely is not science fiction at all has been crowding out interesting and enjoyable reading matter, thereby causing a growing percentage of the magazine to be worthless, tiresome, disgusting and even nauseating to any average intelligent reader.

Several members as usual brought along their copies of the March, 1969, AMAZING after reading it themselves. In discussing the contents in open meeting, the following unanimous conclusions were reached, and as Secretary, I was instructed to pass them on to you as Editor.

Disch: His story was only mildly interesting or amusing.

Sladek: Tiresome trash.

Imboden: Only mildly amusing.

Bunch: Mood music, but is it science fiction? Hell, NO!

Reynolds: Antique stuff, but still the best in the issue.

Meredith: A lot of space wasted on a less than mediocre job.

Lesser: Another antique. Probably from a file of rejected manuscripts bought back in 1952, then never used. (Wrong. A moment's reflection would assure you that a reprint is reprinted. -TW)

Miller: 1954 script. A tiresome tear

jerker maybe, but certainly not science fiction.

Janifer: Nobody at all could read beyond the first two paragraphs without getting too bored to read on. Who is it published for besides Janifer and the type-setter?

Stover: He could have said everything in a quarter page.

Atheling: He could have used his space to review ten more books if he wasn't so verbose and trying to show off his logorrhea.

In self-defense against publishers and writers who mislabel their crap as science fiction, we are making up a list for each of us to take along when buying paperbacks. The phonies listed so far are Bradbury, Zelazny, Aldiss, Anthony, Ellison and O'Donnell, and the list is growing as one after another gets cheated and gypped by this lousy stuff.

Our club has already given up the mag F. & S.F. as hopeless. This means that when mail subscriptions run out they will not be renewed, and *nobody* buys it at the news stands any more. It is our earnest and devout hope that AMAZING doesn't rot away also. We read it for amusement, mental stimulation, relaxation. Being normal mentally, we do not wish to substitute a lot of crap like Zelazny's Steel General (the absolute worst of all time) for intelligent reading matter.

Berbum sat sapientum—
Club Secretary

A suspicious fellow by nature, I find it difficult to accept as a fact the notion that your anonymously written letter, Mr. Club Secretary, reflects the collective opinions of twelve Ph.D.s, twenty-six Master's degrees, etc. Especially since no one in your rather large club seems to have a name. However, for the sake of argument,

allow me to point out that your views (or those of your club) strike me as particularly narrow-minded. Of the list of six names you say you all are boycotting, we have published or will publish soon five, and I might add that I personally value the works of several on your list as among the best the science fiction field has ever given us. You state that you (collectively speaking) read for "mental stimulation." From here it looks as though you can't take the stimulation when it passes beyond the pabulum stage. In your criticism of William Atheling, for example, you seem to indicate that you'd prefer brief listings of books, rather than thoughtful criticism. My own complaint is that Atheling doesn't always take enough space to adequately review the books in question. However, and in any case, if you want me—or any other editor in the field—to take your pronouncements seriously, you're going to have to learn to phrase them a little more appropriately to the intelligence level you claim to represent. —TW

Dear Sirs:

Re: "Apeman, Superman — Or, 2001's Answer to the World-Riddle" by Leon E. Stover. I cannot say that my understanding of the book or movie, 2001, is complete, but Mr. Stover should have read the book before attempting to write his essay. He misinterpreted quite a few points in the movie which were well explained in the book and well illustrated in the movie. The HAL 9000 computer was not IBM, but there is a correlation. That is, H-plus-1 equals I, A-plus-1 equals B, L-plus-1 equals M. This is a minor point, but there are several points on which the author missed the

boat completely.

Michael A. Thompson
Both Kubrick and Clarke have pointed out that the one-letter differential between HAL and IBM is a coincidence. —TW

Dear Editor White:

The March issue of AMAZING is a mixed bag of goodies, as magazines usually are. On the whole, I consider my 50¢ well spent.

"We All Died at Breakaway Station," by Richard Meredith, was an enjoyable novel, though not as "unput-down-able" as the blurb to the first instalment claimed. It had many good points: excitement and mounting suspense; starkly colorful characters who talked and acted intelligently and humanly; and an action-packed conclusion that seemed more believable than an unrealistically happy ending would have. It had many bad points, too, though: the telling of the story from the point of view of an uneducated observer, as an excuse to save the author the trouble of explaining the background of his setting and technology (and I have a personal dislike for "we were all killed; this is a ghost talking to you" narration); particularly faceless villains, who seem little more than a cardboard excuse to allow Admiral Bracer to act heroically noble; and a much too abrupt conclusion, which really sluffs off all the minor plot threads. The major flaw, however, was that the novel read less like real sf than a historical war story disguised as sf. Nothing really happened that couldn't've taken place in a World War II, Pacific theatre naval story. And the semi-climactic event—

the race to collect Admiral Mothershed's information and relay it to Earth before the communications beam is broken—evolves backward to Napoleonic War technology! Why, since Mothershed was in FTL/radio contact with Adrianopolis all the time, didn't he beam in his all-important information, instead of merely sending a call for help and running the risk of being destroyed and having the information lost with him before help could arrive? No reason is given. It may have been dramatic to send a ship racing out to pick up the information, but it's unconvincing drama; contradictory to both plot logic and to the technology shown in the story, and too obviously just a ploy by the author to cram in more suspense. I was left at the conclusion with the impression that, for all its good points, the novel could easily have been much better.

I won't evaluate your reprints; I'll just say that I don't like this policy. I think the magazine should be the domain of original material, not reprints. When I buy a magazine, I expect variety—some good stuff, some bad stuff; stories by well-known authors, stories by unknowns and new authors. But I expect *new* material. If a story is good enough to merit reprinting (as many of yours are), it should appear in book form; as a novel or in a collection, in hard covers or paperback. To use a rough analogy, in the sf field the magazine is the equivalent of a gold mine, containing some valuable metal and a lot of worthless rock and dirt. The book is the equivalent of the refined ingot, containing the valuable metal and

leaving the worthless debris behind. Any nuggets in AMAZING have been or will be reprinted in book form. There's no need to re-reprint them, or to reprint the dross at all, in the magazine. Don't waste time reworking the old tailings; go prospecting for new lodes—new authors—*fresh* stories!

Your book reviews by Atheling are excellent. If we can't have more new fiction, I'd much rather see you expand your review section, and add a letter column, at the expense of the reprinted material.

Fred Patten

To an extent we've done just that—although the book reviews were absent last issue owing to a confusion of deadlines—but we won't be able to eliminate the reprints so long as they are a necessary part of the magazine's financial health. And I'm sure you'd rather see AMAZING continue in its present form than have no AMAZING at all. I like your analogy, but I'm afraid it breaks down rather readily. We are mining new lodes, of course—as long as we continue to buy new stories we shall be looking for new authors of promise as well—but whatever gave you the notion that sf in book form represents a refinement? Presentday volume-sf book publishers are commissioning the bulk of their material in original stories, and are just as subject to deadline-pressure, etc., as we are. I'm sure a glance over any large rack of sf paperbacks would convince you that much of the dross has yet to be refined out. In the long run, of course, it's a matter of editorial tastes—we all like to think we have good judgement and are buying the best stories. —TW

Dear Sirs:

I have been puzzling over the editorial, "Fearless You," by your Associate Editor, Laurence Janifer, in the March AMAZING.

I have tried parsing it, to see if it was really an epic-prose-poem. I have tried decoding it, both by spelling down the margins (the first word is *Ihmstglhgo*), and by more sophisticated devices (I used to read the code-departments in old *SHADOW* pulps). I have even tried semantic analysis (learned at Daddy van Vogt's knee).

Nothing. I get nothing at all. After a gratuitous slam at Harlan Ellison (who is a better writer; maybe that explains it), Mr. Janifer lists what are, he says, three "immense areas of fear, limitation, prejudice and simple blight" in the sf field.

The first, he says, is *Sex*. Okay. Sex, he says, was discovered to modern science fiction by Mr. Farmer in 1952. (I thought Charles Burbee invented it in 1928.) But now, he says, we've over-reacted. That's all he says. What is there about sex that Mr. Janifer is afraid of? (Or is the key word "limitation," "prejudice," or "simple blight"?) What's the man criticising?

Next, *Style*. Somebody—maybe C. L. Moore—discovered style to modern sf; he doesn't say when. Now, he says, we've over-reacted. That's all the man says. Over-reacted? With style? "Over-reaction had handed us teetering piles of stories which consist entirely of style," the man says. *Good style*, or *bad style*? That's like saying, "stories which consist entirely of words." Meaningless.

But I guess he was leading up to his big number three: *Humor*. Yes, must be, because he repeats it again, for effect: *Humor*. Italicized both times. Hmmm. Mr. Janifer once co-authored a dreary series of would-be humorous novels about the decendent of John J. Malone, a detective character (who never got married as far as I recall; oh well, now we're back at *Sex* again) in many of Craig Rice's novels. Mechanical humor. Utterly predictable. Boring. What's more, Mr. Janifer and his co-author not only got these novels serialized, but had them published as books. So why is he griping about how publishers won't publish humorous sf? (Unless, of course, he is making the tacit admission—long overdue—that his books *weren't* that funny after all.) He spends half his editorial on this subject, and I really wish he hadn't. Because he makes no sense at all. "It is obviously easier to write a large solemn book than it is to write a small simple joke," he says. Right! And that's why there isn't much humorous sf floating around these days (or in earlier days, either). It's just too damned hard to write well. It must be many times harder to write good humor than it is standard-fare sf. (And I guess that fact hasn't been lost on Mr. Janifer; I note his recent works haven't even made a pretense at humor.)

So what's the man arguing about?

Why all these words and words of invective, would-be sardonic wit, slashing jibes left and right, when all he has to say is: we're over-reacting to sex (or was that, *with* sex?); we're

becoming too stylish; and there's something wrong (but I can't figure out what) with humor in sf?

Maybe you could ask Mr. Janifer for an editorial in explanation of his editorial?

Carl Brandon III

(Continued from page 85)

Moving with beautiful precision the Trelgans emerged from hiding and converged on the food creatures at top speed, their hurtling bodies smashing smaller bushes and trees out of the way. The strangers' weapons began to flash but Turbon noted with satisfaction that the females were well spaced among the males, and Cadesk almost fell from her perch in anticipatory excitement.

"Don't they smell good," she slobbered. "Tear 'em apart!"

Turbon smiled indulgently, then realised that he could now only see about half the females who had started the charge. The file of food creatures had contracted into an efficient little knot and the sharp reports of their weapons were a continuous crash of thunder. And the astonishing, ghastly truth was that they were concentrating their fire on the widely-spaced females! Even as he realised what was happening, the number of females withered under the accurate shooting until there were only five four three two

A solitary female escaped with the fleeing males as the charge suddenly reversed its direction and raced outwards like the ripple from a pebble dropped in water. Only ten hellish seconds had elapsed since the beginning of the attack but in that time

Turbon had lost more than half of his subjects, including all but one female. He was almost unable to believe it had happened. How *could* it have happened?

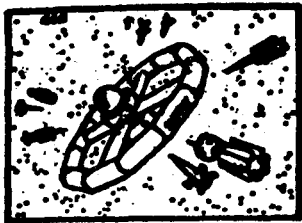
"This is your fault," Cadesk snarled. "This wouldn't have happened but for your big ideas. That settles it—from now on I give the orders around here."

"But I don't understand it," Turbon protested numbly as the file of food creatures re-formed and passed out of sight in the direction of the cave. "The one we trapped gave absolutely no information as to how the others could tell female Trelgans from males. There was just no way they could have known!"

Cadesk slapped him across the face with her powerful tail. "Shut up and let's go," she snapped. "I'm hungry." They climbed down from the tree and together moved into the clearing where the survivors of the ill-fated charge were already returning to dine off their unlucky comrades. In spite of the great shock they had received Turbon and Cadesk still made a handsome couple by Trelgan standards, and the afternoon sun glinted on their sleek, heavy bodies.

On his blue body.

And her pink body.



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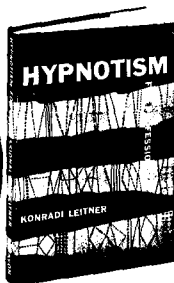
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